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Evanson, Edward, 1731-1805.
Arguments against and for
the sabbatical observance

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ARGUMENTS
AGAINST AND FOR
THE
SABBATICAL OBSERVANCE OF
SUNDAY,
BY A CESSATION FROM ALL LABOUR,
CONTAINED
IN THE LETTERS OF SUNDRY WRITERS
IN THE
THEOLOGICAL REPOSITORY,
WITH
AN ADDITIONAL LETTER TO
THE REVEREND DR. PRIESTLEY,
IN CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

BY E. EVANSON, M.A.

NULLUM IDONEUM MONUMENTUM ADDUCI POTEST EX SECLIS
PRIORIBUS, QUO MANIFESTUM LIQUIDUMQUE FIAT, APOSTOLOS
CULTUM CELEBRATIONEMQUE SABBATI IN DIEM SOLIS TRANS-
TULISSE, QUAMVIS HÆC SENTENTIA TAM ALTAS RADICES IN
QUORUNDUM MENTIBUS EGERIT, UT PARUM ABESSE VIDEATUR,
QUIN ARTICULIS FIDEI PURIORIS ADSCRIBERETUR.—QUAMVIS *DIE*
STATO CHRISTIANI CONVENIRENT, MINIME TAMEN JUDAICO
MORE EUM CELEBRABANT, AB OMNI OPERE VACANTES.

Böhmeri, *Diff.* 1. Sect. xvi.

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THEOLOGICAL
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To the Reader.

ALL the controversial letters here collectively published, except that to Dr. Priestley appeared in the six last numbers of the Theological Repository, which Publication was formally concluded in July, 1788. By that conclusion, the present Editor, who had written on one side of the controversy under the signature Eubulus, was prevented replying, through the same channel, to the letter signed Hermas, which the Rev. Dr. Priestley informed the Public was one of his own signatures. And as he was very far from being satisfied with the Doctor's mode of arguing, he wrote to him to inform him of his dissatisfaction and to ask whether he had any objection to his republishing the whole controversy as it stood in the Repository, together with a reply to his letter; and received from him a very obliging

answer, with full permission to make what use he thought proper of any part of his Repository.

In consequence of this permission it was his intention to publish this collection with a reply to the Doctor's letter immediately. But some domestic circumstances obliging him to defer it for a considerable time, he began to grow indifferent to the subject; and to reflect that if such a man as Dr. Priestley could be induced by habitual prejudice to argue in defence of a religious institution, notoriously ordained by the founders of the anti-Christian Church, and, to say the least of it, certainly not commanded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, other persons could be less expected to surmount their prejudices. So that the time seemed not yet arrived for reasoning upon it to be of any service. Whilst unbelievers might perhaps be more confirmed in their rejection of a religion professing to proceed from the great fountain of light and to be the dictates of perfect wisdom, yet so obscure and unintelligible in its positive institutions, as well as doctrines, that two men educated for the clerical profession who have both avowedly turned their studies to the investigation of the true religion of the Gospel and of the subsequent corruptions of Christianity by human folly and superstition, could not agree whether an in-

stitution of so much consequence to mankind as the sabbatical observance of Sunday undoubtedly is, in whatsoever light it be considered, is or is not an ordinance of the genuine religion of Christ. For these reasons, and because two or three friends, of whose judgement he has an high opinion, assured him they thought the force of the arguments already urged by Eubulus had not been invalidated by Dr. Priestley's letter, and that therefore a reply was unnecessary; he determined to drop the controversy and leave it as it stood at the conclusion of the Theological Repository.

From this tacit state of indolent indifference, however, he has been lately roused by the innate principal of self defence, in reading Mr. Christie's Letters upon the French Revolution. Where in a note upon the hour of the national assembly's meeting on Sunday he was much surprized to find himself, as author of the objections stated in the Theological Repository against the modern sabbath, accused expressly of rashness and thoughtlessness and implicitly of being a Foe to Piety and even to Humanity. The Note is this, "The urgent
 " nature of their situation and business justified the
 " French Legislators, in suspending the obser-
 " vance of Sunday as a day of rest from ordinary
 " labours. But such a practice will not pro-

“ bably be continued. The ensuing Legislature
 “ will renew the respect so justly due to one of
 “ the most ancient and most venerable institutions
 “ that exist in civilized society. The excellence
 “ of Sunday as a political institution had scarcely
 “ been questioned by those who paid no regard to
 “ it in a religious light, till lately that some
 “ rash and thoughtless writers attacked it in the
 “ Theological Repository. Dr. Priestley
 “ summed up all their arguments, and replied
 “ to them with such ability as entitles him to
 “ the thanks of every man of piety and still more
 “ of every man of humanity.”

From Mr. Christie's speaking of this attack
 upon the Sunday sabbath as made by more than
 one writer, he appears not to have read Eubulus's
 letters himself and to know nothing of the con-
 troversy, but what he learnt from Dr. Priestley's
 letter signed Hermas. If so, Eubulus has reason
 to complain of his severe censure, as being the
 sentence of an unequitable, partial judge, passed
 upon hearing the arguments of one party only.
 And whether that be so or not, conscious that
 his objections against that institution, were very
 far from being urged rashly or for want of mature
 thought and consideration, but with the sincerest
 and most deliberate intention to promote the know-

ledge of true, unadulterated christianity, and the moral virtue and welfare of his fellow creatures, he knows the accusation to be groundless and untrue.

Whether his opinion of the point in debate, or that of Mr. Christie and his friend Dr. Priestley be most reasonable, the Editor willingly submits to the decision of those readers who can sufficiently divest themselves of habitual prejudices to become impartial judges of the question. He is not so arrogant as to pretend to vie with Dr. Priestley for extraordinary talents and ability; but he will yield to no man in the fervor or sincerity of his zeal for the causes of rational piety and human happiness.

He cannot however forbear remarking, that Mr. Christie in this censorial note upon the impiety and inhumanity of Eubulus advances the very same plea in behalf of the object of his own prejudice, a Sunday sabbath, which he will not allow Mr. Burke, in favour of the Monasteries and other Ecclesiastical institutions abolished by the National Assembly of France, viz. their being ancient and venerable and of excellent political uses; yet, if antiquity alone can sanctify any religious error or superstitious institution, it

is certain that the system of the Divine Humanity, as Mr. Burke with much grave solemnity denominated it in the first edition of his celebrated letter ; upon which, before the late revolution, the religion of France was founded and established to the political exclusion of every other persuasion, and which if the Editor is not misinformed, Mr. Christie as well as every other rational christian, regards as absurd, incongruous, and even blasphemous, and also the institution of the order of Monks, are both prior in date to the observance of Sunday as a day of rest from ordinary labours.

As to the political use of any ordinance connected with religion, after the numberless evils, with which the natural rights and feelings and even the consciences of the inhabitants of Christendom have been violated and outraged for above fourteen centuries by blending politics and religion together, it is surely high time to separate them and to “ render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s and unto God the things that are God’s.” At least before such arguments are urged, men should first determine whether the Gospel of Jesus Christ be true and of the celestial origin it pretends to, or whether it be like the Koran of Mahomet or the Revelations of Numa Pompilius

political fiction and mere human device. On the latter supposition indeed, and on no other can statesmen have a right to interpret its doctrines and ordain its positive institutions. But if it really be a religion revealed from heaven, like the revelation by Moses and every other work of God it must have come forth compleat and perfect from its divine author, and though it ought undoubtedly to regulate the conduct of Rulers and Politicians as well as of private Individuals, since even the Pagan maxim allowed the authority of heaven to be paramount to that of all earthly sovereigns, in reges ipsos Jovis est imperium, human Legislatures can have no more right to controul or regulate or to add to or diminish its doctrines, precepts, or institutions, than private citizens have to controul or regulate or add to or diminish the laws of the state.

In every religious institution therefore a sincere and rational disciple of Jesus Christ will consider not what political use it may be of, but by what authority it is ordained. But to talk of the political benefit to mankind of an institution which absolutely annihilates the seventh part of all human industry, is so glaring an absurdity

that I am confident nothing but a groundless persuasion through the misrepresentation of the clergy, that the spirit, though not the letter, of the fourth commandment of the Jewish law was binding upon Christians, could have induced statesmen to establish it.

In France superstition had immured prebaps 100,000 healthy citizens, (I speak at random) and thereby deprived the state of the industry of the two hundred and fiftieth part of its inhabitants; but in the same country the intermission of all kinds of labour every Sunday is as great a diminution of the national industry as if the cloisters of their monasteries still imprisoned three millions and a half or one-seventh part of all their citizens.

The Jesuits have long proved to the world how useful monastic institutions may be as repositories of learning and seminaries of education; and, as Mr. Burke suggests, an able statesman might without doubt convert them to other purposes beneficial to the community, though not in such a degree as to compensate for the evils arising to society from the celibacy as well as indolence of the cloister. But to what political use and benefit, can the universal idleness of sunday be applied? when experience shews us that the

utmost efforts of the legislature and the magistrates are insufficient to prevent the most pernicious abuses of it.

The institution of sunday schools for the children of the labouring people, provided as soon as the children have learnt to read they are instructed also in writing and arithmetic, is the only instance of the application of sunday leisure to any temporal benefit, and even that is obtained by the breach and not by the observance of a sabbath. For both the masters and the pupils of such schools must be as laboriously and attentively employed in them during the intervening hours of sunday, as if they were occupied in any other business. The universal intermission of the labour of giving and receiving instruction in temporal learning every sunday in our universities, and in all the public and private schools of the kingdom proves this to be the general opinion.

If then the children of labouring people may be not only innocently but usefully occupied, during the leisure hours of Sunday in attending to the business of those schools. What rational liberal mind can suppose that the sunday attendance of their parents at our religious assemblies, could be less pleasing to heaven or less edifying

to themselves; that they would become worse christians or worse citizens, if they also employed the leisure intervals of the day in some honest useful occupation, rather than in tippling at public houses, sauntering in the highways and fields, sitting at home with their hands before them or yawning over, what are called, Books of Piety and Devotion?



T O T H E
DIRECTORS of the THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY.

GENTLEMEN,

PERMIT me, through the channel of your very useful publication, to endeavour to excite an attention to the grounds of a religious observance, which prevails amongst all professed christians, and which is held so sacred, and of such high importance by even the most serious, best intentioned persons, of all theological opinions, that, I am aware reason has but a small chance of success in a conflict with such an inveterate, universal prejudice. However, as superstition is still superstition, by how many soever it may have been adopted; and as its effects in this, as well as in every other instance, are pernicious to the moral virtue, and, of course, to the happiness of mankind; whatever others may think of my attempting to tear of the mask from an institution so long and generally revered, I myself am convinced that I only discharge the duty of a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ, and of a real friend to the welfare of my fellow creatures.

The religious observance, I mean, is the keeping the first day of the week as a Jewish sabbath, or day of cessation from all worldly business. An institution which cannot be productive of any valuable ends, but such as are easily to be attained without it; and which not only occasions a loss to individuals, and to the community at large, of one-seventh part of the industry of manufacturers and labourers of every kind; but, what is infinitely more important, induces a very large majority of that most useful and most numerous part of the people, to mispend that seventh of their time in dissipation and intemperance, which too naturally, and too certainly, lead them to vicious immoralities and crimes of every degree.

In the investigation of right and wrong respecting the institution of any religious observance under the revelation of the gospel, the first and grand point to be considered is, whether it owes its origin to the positive injunctions of the authorised publishers of that revelation to the world. For if that can be proved to be the case, all argument is at an end, and whoever receives the revelation must necessarily feel himself bound to comply with the institution: but, if it cannot, the institution is certainly of no religious obligation; and the zealous, strict observance of it is merely superstition. Should it be innocent, it is, at least, unnecessary: and if it tend, in any degree, to corrupt the morals of the lower ranks of people, the com-

elling them to observe it is not impolitic only, but criminal.

That there is not one positive precept in any of the books of the New Testament, for keeping a sabbath, is well known to all who are acquainted with them. Most certainly, therefore, it is not kept in obedience to the divine authority of the gospel: neither is it kept in obedience to the fourth commandment of the Jewish law; for besides that no law of the Jewish religion can be binding upon a Christian, any farther than as it is repeated and re-established by the gospel (as are the precepts against idolatry and profane swearing, and those in favour of all the moral, social duties) professed christians, in general, do not keep their sabbath on the day commanded by that law; but upon another day, to which that commandment hath not the most distant reference.

It is pretended, however, that though the sanctifying the first day of the week, and keeping it as a Jewish sabbath, is not expressly commanded in the gospel, it may be inferred from certain passages in the holy scriptures, and in the works of the earliest writers of christianity, that it was practised by the apostles themselves, and all the primitive christians, who, we are told, used to hold their religious assemblies on that day; and who, it may therefore be concluded, transferred the sabbatical cessation from all other business from the last to the first day of the week, in honour of our Lord and Saviour, who rose from the grave

on that day of the week, and on the same day repeatedly manifested himself to his disciples.

To a close-reasoning mind this very state of the question must appear a complete giving up the point in dispute. For surely, under any religious law whatsoever, to establish so important an institution as annihilates, at one stroke, the seventh part of all human industry, nothing less can be requisite, than the express command of the lawgiver himself. And to him who recollects that the fatal apostacy from true christianity, and the entire structure of idolatrous, antichristian superstition, which hath for so many ages usurped its place, were effected by means of fallacious inferences from particular passages of scripture, and a zeal for magnifying the honour of the Messiah, the very mode of argument used in its defence, will suggest strong suspicions of fallacy and error.

With respect to the holy scriptures, however, the truth is, that the apostles and first disciples of Jesus Christ are no where said to have distinguished the first day of the week in any manner whatsoever. There are only two passages, viz. John xx. 10. and Acts xx. 7. which mention their being assembled on that day. In the first, from the circumstances of the case, it is manifest their meeting could not be for the purpose of any religious observance; but merely to confer together upon the testimony and evidence of their master's resurrection. And from the lateness of the hour, at which the two disciples must have returned,

from Emmaus to Jerusalem, it is certain that the evening assembly mentioned there, and in the parallel passage of St. Luke, according to the Jewish computation of time, instead of being on the first, was really on the beginning of the second day. Besides the apostles themselves not understanding the religion of the gospel till after their forty days instruction from our Lord, after his resurrection, and neither being commissioned nor qualified to teach it to others, before the subsequent feast of Pentecost, nothing previous to that æra can be of the least obligation to us.

The other passage, viz. Acts xx. 7. deserves our particular attention, and is as follows,—
 “ And upon the first day of the week, when
 “ the disciples came together to break bread,
 “ Paul preached unto them (ready to depart
 “ on the morrow) and continued his speech
 “ until midnight.” The meeting here spoken of was evidently in the very beginning of the first day of the week, that is, in the evening, after the business of the preceding day was over. And if their *coming together to break bread* means their participating of the Lord’s supper, as from the general term, *the disciples*, is highly probable, it shews us, that St. Paul thought it better to use the evening for the purpose of celebrating that sacred institution, as well as of instruction, than to break in upon the daily occupations of the Gentile converts. And as the historian assures us, that he both intended and did actually set out on his journey at break of day, this passage of scripture affords

us a decisive proof that St. Paul had no idea of keeping the first day of the week as a Sabbath.

The only subsequent passage, in which the first day of the week is so much as mentioned, is that of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." A very rational provision for regulating and preparing every person's quota of the charitable collections which the persecuted state of the Jewish converts made necessary in those early times of christianity; but which is so far from insinuating any peculiar sanctity, ascribed by the apostles to that day of the week, that it implies in it a direction to every disciple of those times to settle his accounts on that day for the preceding week, that he might proportion his contribution to the state of his circumstances; a business quite incompatible with the idea of a Sabbath day.

But though no passages of holy scripture can be produced which, even by inference, recommend to christians the keeping the first day of the week sacred, as a Sabbath day, there are others, which expressly teach us, that the gospel does not require of its disciples any such observance.

How far the Jewish law, even whilst the temple and government of the Jews subsisted, was binding upon the Gentile converts to christianity, was a question very early agitated and referred to the decision of the apostles them-

selves at Jerufalem ; who, after receiving the information of thofe that had been particularly instrumental in converting the Gentiles, at the miraculous command of heaven itfelf, and weighing every circumftance of the cafe, formally decreed, that, as chriftians, it was not neceffary for them to obferve any injunctions of the law of Mofes whatfoever, except “the
 “ abftaining from meats offered to idols ; from
 “ blood ; from things ftrangled, and from for-
 “ nication.” Now, can any candid mind, endued with common fenfe, fuppofe, if keeping a Sabbath day had been a chriftian duty, efpecially a duty fo important, as feems generally imagined, that the mention of it could have been omitted on fuch an occafion ? For, in every language, to fay that only fuch and fuch particulars of a law are neceffary to be obferved, is plainly and expreffly to declare, that every other particular is unneceffary. It deferves to be confidered alfo, that the apoftles, fubject to the prepoftions of habit, like all other men, were fo little inclined in this cafe to omit any thing that appeared to them in the fmalleft degree neceffary to the chriftian converts, that the very nature of St. Paul’s arguments, in his epiftles refpecting meat offered to idols, clearly fhews, that they exceeded the authority of their commiffion in every article of their decree, except the laft, *the abftaining from fornication*, which, whether it be underftood in a fpiritual or carnal fenfe, is undoubtedly a chriftian duty ; not however in compliance with any injunction of the Jewish law,

but in obedience to its repeated prohibition in the gospel. But notwithstanding this summary decision of the question, by an assembly of the apostles themselves, we find that the Galatians suffered themselves to be persuaded by some other disciples, zealots to the Mosaic law, to superadd the observance of all the precepts of that law, to the religion of Jesus Christ. And the sole scope of St. Paul's epistle to that people is, to reprove them for, and to reclaim them from so unreasonable and heterogeneous a practice; in that he expressly blames them for "*observing days and months, and times and years;*" by which words, according to my apprehension, he could only mean the *Sabbath days, new moons, festival seasons, and sabbatical years* of the Jews.

On this footing stands the state of the question, so far as the books of the New Testament are concerned. And since the arguments in favour of the observance are so far from finding any support from that quarter, a man unacquainted with those writings of the christians of the three first centuries, which have been permitted to reach our hands, would naturally conclude, that they, at least, were clear and full in ascertaining the fact, that the first day of the week was, in their times, kept as a sabbath by all the professors of christianity. How then must such an one be astonished, when he finds, what is strictly true, that, instead of informing us such a sabbath was kept, they expressly assure us, that, neither had the gospel enjoined, nor did they practise

any such observance! Nay, they go farther, and, as St. Paul argued against the necessity of circumcision, because the blessings of the christian covenant were promised to Abraham and his seed after him, whilst he was yet uncircumcised, so they adopt a similar argument to prove, that sabbath-keeping could not be a duty of the gospel, because the promises of the gospel were given to Abraham, and repeated to all the patriarchs; though they kept no sabbath, but lived several centuries before the command for keeping the sabbath was given. It is true, they inform us that christians in their times, used to assemble together on the first day of the week, a custom probably introduced by St. Paul's recommending it to the Corinthians, to settle their accounts for the preceding week, and to deposit their quotas of the charitable collections on that day. And, as our Lord had enjoined upon his disciples, to commemorate him by a common participation of bread and wine, it seems necessary that some stated time should be fixed for that purpose. But, in the first and purest ages of christianity, their meetings were short; and, either very early in the morning, before the usual hours of business, after which they departed, each to his several daily occupation: or else, in the evening, after all the business of the day was ended. It was not till the reign of Constantine, that is, till the fourth Century of the christian æra, that the first day of the week was ordered to be kept sacred as a sabbath-day. And it is curious to remark, that that prince, whose

profession and establishment of what was then, very falsely, called christianity, appears to have been entirely political, enjoined the sabbatical cessation from business, only upon the cities and large towns, and could not be prevailed upon to extend the order to the villages and country in general, no doubt providently apprehending, that the suppression of agriculture and other rural occupations for one-seventh of the year, might, in some seasons, be, at least locally, attended with very fatal consequences. The observance of a sabbath therefore amongst christians, is founded upon no religious authority whatsoever: but was ordained solely by the interposition of the same civil power, which laid the foundation of that idolatrous, blasphemous superstition, which, though diametrically opposite to the religion of Jesus Christ, both in its principles and effects, hath, for so many centuries, superseded it in the West; and which, for wise reasons, the divine providence hath suffered to be supplanted in the East and South by the gross imposture of Mahomet.

From this plain and brief deduction, which no one acquainted with the history of the early ages of christianity will attempt to controvert, it appears, first, that sabbath-keeping is no duty of the gospel; secondly, that it is an institution only of that predicted anti-christian religion, which, from the days of Constantine to our own, has been upheld merely by the power of the civil magistrate. Howsoever well and wisely therefore some people may employ the idle hours of sabbatical leisure, there

can be no merit in the observance considered in a religious view. The religion of the gospel of Christ is a system of moral rules, intended solely to influence the minds, and direct the practice of its professors, in every action and moment of their lives. Such a religion can be of no use at all, unless men keep it constantly in their thoughts, and regulate their whole conduct by those rules. It is the indispensable duty therefore of a sincere christian, to meditate daily upon the obligations of his religion, and not to sleep without reviewing his behaviour through the preceding day, and comparing it with the sacred rule of life he has engaged himself to follow. To him therefore the appointment of any particular days or seasons for religious meditation, is unnecessary and superfluous. But how small a part of the great bulk of the people, have either inclination or ability, to employ the weekly returns of sabbatical idleness in what are called religious exercises and meditations; even if there were any real benefit in so doing! Look round amongst those higher orders of men, whose situation and circumstances afford them the greatest share of leisure time; and though they, for the most part, have had the great advantages of a liberal education, observe how few of them employ their leisure to any valuable purpose; and how many abuse it, to their own and others detriment. Who then can think it possible, that the uninformed minds of the illiterate and ignorant can wisely and virtuously spend one-seventh part of their lives in idleness, or

rather, that great numbers of them should not mispend it, as we find they do, to the corruption of their own morals, and the insecurity and annoyance of society in general.

That admirable, perfect model of prayer to the Deity, taught us by our Lord himself, contains but four petitions that personally respect ourselves; and one of them is, *that we may not be led into temptation*. A petition which evidently enjoins upon us, as an essential duty of our religion, the doing our utmost to preserve both ourselves and our fellow creatures from falling into so perilous a situation. Whereas the calling off the labouring orders of men, from their usual honest occupations, and obliging them to pass every seventh day in an idleness, which many of them cannot but mispend, is forcing them into a weekly state of the most dangerous temptation; the consequence of which must be, what we experimentally find it, especially in all populous places, a most fatal depravity of their morals. And, I have no doubt, it was for this very reason, that the religion of the gospel enjoins upon its professors, no sabbatical cessation from business, nor festival seasons of any kind.

In a religion like that established by Constantine and his successors, in which consecrated churches succeeded to the temples, a distinct order of men to the priesthood, and the parade of what is called public worship to the sacrifices of both Pagans and Jews, it seems necessary also to adopt their particular days and seasons of extraordinary devotion to make

the former appear of sufficient importance: and, without doubt, the more the ritual of the new religion resembled those customs to which the people had been habituated, the more likely it was to gain profelytes, and to become the catholic profession of the empire. But christianity, as taught by Jesus and his apostles, ordains none of these things. The evangelists inform us, that our great master, both by his example, and express precept, hath taught us, that prayer to God, though the indispensable duty of a christian, is the duty only of his private closet, where there is no place for hypocrisy and feigned devotion. Howsoever decent therefore and proper it may be for christians, when assembled together for any other purpose, to join in concise prayers or praises, expressive of their common feelings, the assembling merely for the purpose of public worship, is not a duty of the gospel.

Under the christian institution, I know but of two causes for assembling together, which have any reference to that religion, viz. The commemorative participation of bread and wine, and the purposes of instruction and mutual exhortation. As to the first, when we consider the hour of the day, the domestic manner in which it was instituted, and the example of the first disciples of Jesus Christ in observing it, it seems impossible to assign any reason, why the observance of this commemoration should ever interfere with the ordinary occupations of men and the usual hours of business. And, with respect to the second, if,

instead of one entire day spent in idleness, an hour at a time, in an evening, twice or thrice a week, were employed in explaining not single detached sentences of the text of scripture, but the whole of the authentic books of the new testament, in a regular, well divided course of lectures, in so familiar a manner as to allow and induce the hearers to propound their particular doubts and uncertainties, and ask for farther explanation where it should appear wanted, it would be of infinitely greater use and benefit, than the present mode of public instruction, than which it is difficult to conceive any method of teaching less proper for the young, illiterate, and uninformed; that is, for all those who stand most in need of being instructed.

The great number of unhappy criminals, who die, testifying that they owe their ruin to what they ignorantly call Sabbath-breaking; and the present laudable endeavours of many benevolent persons in the metropolis, and other populous towns, to establish Sunday schools, are convincing proofs of the great and well-known mischiefs that must ever attend the weekly abuse of the idleness of the Sabbath amongst the lower ranks of people. Such schools, if properly instituted, will certainly be of benefit, so far as their influence extends: that is, the children instructed in them, instead of lounging away the day in childish pastimes, or mispending it in doing mischief, will employ it in the acquisition of some useful knowledge. But on grown peo-

ple they can have no effect ; and so much is the human, as well as every other animal, a creature of imitation, that even the scholars of these Sunday schools, when past the age of attending them, will soon become blended with the general mass of people of their own rank ; will frequent the same pernicious assemblies at public houses, and be initiated in the same weekly vicious excesses or expensive dissipation, which ever have been, and ever must be, whilst sabbatical idleness is suffered to continue, destructive of that practical moral virtue, to establish which amongst mankind was the sole object of the genuine religion of Jesus Christ.

I am, Gentlemen, &c. &c.

E U B U L U S.

To the DIRECTORS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

THE following paper, occasioned by that of Eubulus, will, I doubt not, be allowed a place in your useful work, if it be judged worthy of one. Some other correspondent of yours, will, I trust, feel himself prompted to take up after me the defence of the practice objected to by that gentleman. If he be in the wrong, and any other reader of the Repository be convinced with me that he is so, he will surely not be backward to lend all the additional support he can afford to that side of the question which I have

espoused. The subject to be discussed must, in the view of such a person, be one of very high importance: I, therefore, flatter myself with the prospect of assistance. Under this expectation, I feel less reluctance to lay my humble attempt before the public, presuming that I shall see any omissions or defects, which may be discovered in what I have written, amply supplied by some abler pen.

1. The Jewish sabbath was plainly intended to be not merely a day of rest from bodily labour, but also of public and social religious worship. It was to be celebrated by *a holy convocation*, which no doubt, signified the calling of the people together to join in acts of public worship to their Maker, On that day *they were not to do their own ways, nor find their own pleasure, nor speak their own words*, i. e. as it should seem, they were not to pursue their secular employments, to indulge themselves in taking recreations and diversions, or to talk about matters of worldly business. In other words, they were to spend the day in nothing but religious meditation and devotional exercises.---This I apprehend to have been sufficiently proved by Dr. Jennings (see his *Jewish Antiq.* B. 3. C. 3.) and others. Accordingly we find, that the prophets severely reprehended the Jews for either the violation or neglect of the sabbath. Now, if God thought fit to appoint one day in seven to be thus kept by a particular people, to threaten those who disobeyed his command with excision, to remind them from time to time by his prophets of the obligation they were under

to observe that day in the manner they prescribed, and to advertise them of the dreadful consequences, national as well as personal, which would follow inattention to this duty, there is the highest reason to suppose that the wisdom of the Deity saw it to be necessary, for the spiritual improvement of his people, that they should devote one day of the week to religious exercises, without interruption from temporal concerns. If this be admitted, and that human nature remains the same, and liable to the same influences from present scenes and occupations, it is no more than a fair presumption, that God intended that mankind should allot the proportion of one seventh part of their time to religious employments under *all* his dispensations.

2. The christian dispensation arose, as it were, out of the Jewish. It derived part of its evidence from the accomplishment of predictions delivered by Jewish prophets. It was introduced by a person educated a Jew, and sent himself to none but the people of his own nation. Any practice, therefore, which this person did not expressly abrogate, but himself conform to, after he was invested with his public character, he was, no doubt, regarded as acknowledging to be still obligatory upon his countrymen. The Jewish sabbath he appears himself to have kept, and not to have objected to its being kept by the Jews, according to the direction of their law. It is true, that he condemned the Jews of weak and groundless superstition in pretending that acts of beneficence were not to be performed on that day ;

but he no where charged any of them with a fault, after they became his disciples, in continuing to attend the worship of the temple or synagogue, or in employing the part of it, spent at their homes, in a religious manner. As we are not informed that he did any thing of this sort, the countenance which he gave to the observance of the sabbath by his own behaviour stood unopposed. And though the particular reason for which the keeping of the seventh day was prescribed to the Jews, does not affect others, so that from that circumstance it cannot be inferred, that gentile converts were bound to keep the same, yet the conduct of our Lord in employing the seventh part of his time according to the established custom of his country, and in not giving the most distant hint, that it was too much to be so employed, shews that he did not think it a too large proportion of time to be devoted to religious purposes.

Had this really been his opinion, and had he, therefore, intended to shorten it for the ease and benefit of his followers, we might expect to find, that he had dropped some intimation of his design on one or other of those occasions, on which he was accused of breaking the sabbath, especially as he claimed to be Lord of the sabbath. As he gave no such intimation, his conduct must have led the Jews to conclude, that he was not commissioned to release them, on becoming his disciples, from the obligation they were under by the law to abstain from the pursuit of worldly business and pleasure on the sabbath, and to keep it holy to the

Lord. It could not be necessary for him to ratify afresh an injunction of the law by an express command to shew, that he did not intend to annul it. His own uniform compliance with it could be understood in no other light than a full acknowledgement, that it was still to remain in force with respect to the Jews, at least till the dissolution of their civil polity, if not afterwards. He censured with the greatest freedom the false glosses that had been put upon the law, and the absurd traditions by which it had been made void, but to the law itself he objected not: that, he said, he was not come to destroy. He, therefore, evidently approved of the Jewish converts observing the sabbath with the strictness really prescribed by the law.

Perhaps, as he foresaw and predicted the overthrow of the Jewish state, he might not esteem it necessary to command the Jewish converts to observe the sabbath after that event, when they would be forced to discontinue some of their ceremonies, foreseeing that they would either look upon themselves as bound by the law and his example to do so, or that they would keep some other day holy to God, which being equally well calculated to answer all the religious and moral purposes of the sabbath, he might not think it needful to caution them against making such a change. But had he (whose zeal was so great for the public honour and worship of his heavenly Father, as to scourge from the temple those who profaned it by converting it into a place of merchandize) being aware that his follow-

ers would cease to regard one day above another in direct opposition to his own example, and to a practice which infinite wisdom had thought fit to injoin, in the most solemn manner, on all the people of his nation, he would doubtless have been particularly careful to guard them against so unprecedented and dangerous a conduct.

3. The apostles, after our Lord's ascension, acted in the same manner as he had done during his life-time. It was the manner of Paul in particular, that champion for the liberty of the gentile converts, to attend the synagogues every sabbath-day. In his speech before Festus he declares, that against the law he had not offended any thing at all. Now can we suppose, that the apostles would have continued to do as their master had done before them, if they had received any private instructions from him, or been directed by the Spirit, to weaken by degrees the attachment of the Jewish converts to any such practice, as that, in which they had been brought up, but which, on account of its being, in fact, superstitious and injurious, was to be abolished? Would Paul especially, who so resolutely withstood the imposing spirit of the Jewish converts, not only have refrained from hinting to them, that they were no longer bound to observe any day as a sabbath, but also have countenanced their apprehension that they were so by his own conduct, had he been authorised to teach them a different doctrine? I know, that Eubulus hath brought a passage from the epistle to the Galatians, which he supposes to militate against

such an inference as I have deduced from Paul's conduct; but I think, that your ingenious correspondent Hermas, in his paper on the perpetuity of the Jewish ritual, sect. 4th and 5th, hath shewn with respect to such casual expressions of the apostle, that they ought not to be rigorously understood, but candidly interpreted by the language of his behaviour, which should be taken into consideration, when we investigate the meaning of his words, that we may not set *these* and his *actions* at irreconcilable variance with each other. I, therefore, infer from the unequivocal declaration of Paul, Acts xxv. 8. xxviii. 17. and from his conduct and that of the other apostles, that they did not oppose, but countenance the observance of a weekly day of rest to be devoted to religious exercises, and that they did not object to the Jewish converts still keeping the sabbath.

4. There are plain traces of the observance of what is called the Lord's day in scripture, before the death of the apostles. On the day of Pentecost, which seems to have been the first day of the week (See Dr. Jennings's Jew. Ant. b. 3. c. 5.) the apostles and the hundred and twenty disciples were assembled (See Dr. Benson's *first planting of christianity*. b. i. c. i. sect. 1.). On the first day of the week the disciples met together to break bread. Acts xx. 7. On the first day of the week every one was to lay by him in store for charitable uses, as God had prospered him. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. John was in the spirit on the Lord's day. Rev. i. 10.

From these passages it seems highly probable, that the first day of the week was particularly distinguished and regarded from the time of our Lord's resurrection, or at least very soon, if not immediately, after his ascension; and from the last of them it appears, that before the death of John it had obtained the name of *the Lord's day*. As John did nothing more than use the epithet *κυριακη* to distinguish the day he alluded to, and wrote for the use of christians in general, of that and all succeeding ages, it is evident, that he knew they wanted no other mark to discover what day he meant, and that, therefore, it was a name universally given to the first day at that time by christians. Now as the *sabbath* was a name affixed to a particular day under the Jewish dispensation, to denote that it was a day of rest and public worship, it is probable that the first day of the week was called *the Lord's*, for the like reason. On the former the Jews had been delivered from bondage, and were, therefore, ordered to keep it holy; on the latter Jesus *was manifested to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection*. As the apostles and the other Jewish converts had been accustomed to observe the former in commemoration of the divine mercy to their nation, I think it is likely, that as the latter was distinguished by an event, which confirmed the divine mission of their Saviour, and on which their hopes rested, they celebrated it by abstaining from bodily labour, and joining in acts of social worship. If they thought proper to distinguish it at all by *any*

religious notice, and the performance of a *particular* rite, on account of the most important of all events having taken place upon it, there is a probability, that as Jews, who had observed the sabbath in commemoration of a temporal deliverance in a very solemn manner, they kept the Lord's day with equal respect and reverence. And I think that the first christians would hardly have given it the name of *the Lord's day*, if this had not been the case, and they had not conceived, that there was a peculiar propriety in their doing so in honour of their Saviour.

5. The word *church*, so frequently occurring in the scriptures of the New Testament, is allowed to signify assemblies of people called out and convened for some particular purpose. Now, whether the assemblies, meant by the word *church* in those writings, were held in a private house, and consisted only of the persons belonging to it (which seems to be sometimes the case), or were composed of several households, who met together in a place agreed upon among them, it cannot be doubted but that the object of their coming together was to engage in acts of social worship, and to enjoy the means of edification. What is said about churches leads to this idea. But I think that the word *church* would not have been adopted, especially when there is a reference to a single household only, if it had not been designed to convey the idea of their uniting *at some stated time* in religious exercises, in a more *particular manner* than at others. The term would have been needlessly, if not improperly, employed,

had it been intended to signify no more than a meeting of the members of a christian family to join in *daily* devotion. This every Jew must have understood to be a standing family duty, and would not have used himself, or expected to see used by others, a *particular* and seemingly *appropriate* term to distinguish the persons of a private house meeting to perform this common duty, equally incumbent upon all, from others. I therefore conceive, that this term suggests the idea of persons, assembling on a *particular fixed day* for religious purposes. This day we shall see farther reason, as we proceed, to suppose to be *the Lord's day*.

6. Had not the first christians set apart some day of the week for religious worship, and held it sacred, their Jewish neighbours would have looked upon them as atheists. But where do we find that they regarded them in that light? The Jewish converts might continue to attend the synagogues on the sabbath, as well as keep the Lord's day. King produces evidence of both having been observed in the eastern churches in the time of Origen. Enquiry into the Constitution, &c. pt. 2. ch. 7. sect. 11.

7. As it cannot be disputed, that churches were formed in various parts of the world in the days of the apostles, so there are many strong indications, not yet noticed, of their observing a day for religious purposes. In the churches of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, Paul and Barnabas ordained elders, i. e. some of the earliest converts of those cities, who had been most fully instructed, and were, therefore, best quali-

fied to teach others. But for what end did they appoint such officers, if there was not a *particular time* for the exercise of their function. There is not the shadow of a reason, as far as I can discover, for supposing that the apostles took them off entirely from secular pursuits (as we shall by and by see they did) to be every day employed in nothing but going from house to house to teach, which in the day-time would have occasioned an interruption of business. And if they had made their pastoral visits when the business of the day was over, which perhaps they frequently did, where would have been the necessity, unless for a purpose hereafter to be mentioned, for their not working themselves in the day? As, then, elders were ordained, and being invested with an office, did, no doubt, at some time or other, discharge the duties of it, and that probably not at seasons when they must have called off the members of their flocks from their worldly business, it was doubtless more peculiarly at a time when they were at leisure to attend to their instructions, and used to meet to celebrate the Lord's supper, i. e. on the Lord's day. But of this I proceed to adduce farther proof.

Paul tells the Corinthians (1 Ep. ch. xi. v. 18) that *he heard there were divisions among them, when they met together in the church*. On what day they were accustomed to meet there is clearly pointed out by a circumstance mentioned in the 20th verse, where the apostle says, *when ye come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper*; for the supper no where appears

as I remember, to have been eaten on any other than the Lord's day. As on this day the Corinthian converts used to assemble to commemorate the death of Christ, so likewise to perform other duties of religion; for we read in the 14th chapter, of prophesying, praying, and singing in the church, which the apostle speaks of as acts in which they engaged when they met, which no doubt was on the day that they partook of the Lord's supper, in the celebration of which he had charged them with being guilty of great indecencies. For, as he is still pursuing one subject, and giving directions with respect to behaviour and the management of offices to be performed in the church, there can be no just ground for supposing that he refers to any *other* day. On this day, therefore, they prophesied, prayed, and sung, as well as celebrated the rite of the supper. Now what probability is there, that all these duties were crowded together into the compass of an hour after the christians of Corinth had finished the labours of the day. The apostle permitted two, or three, or even all of the prophets to speak *one by one*, ver. 29 and 31; and as prophesying was for the edification of those who believed, ver. 22, it probably consisted of instructions relating to christian doctrines and duties, which it might employ the prophets some considerable time to illustrate and enforce. This part of the public service, together with the others of praying, singing, and distributing the elements of the supper among the communicants, surely filled up more than an hour,

if they were all done *decently, and in order*, and might easily furnish employment for as many hours as are now usually allotted for the public services of the Lord's day.

Paul, in his first epistle to Timothy, ch. v. ver. 18. commands, *Let the elders, that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially those, who labour in the word and doctrine.* That the apostle comprehended, under the word *honour*, some recompence for the services done the church, is manifest from the next verse, which is introduced with the conjunction *for*, to shew that he is going to produce a reason for the command he had immediately before delivered. His words are, *For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox, that treadeth out the corn; and, the labourer is worthy of his reward.* But in his first epistle to the Corinthians, ch. ix. ver. 14. he says expressly, *The Lord hath ordained, that they who preach the gospel, which I conceive to mean the same as labouring in the word and doctrine, should live of the gospel.* Now can it be at all likely, either that elders should be called off from worldly occupations, which, had they pursued them as other christians who were not appointed to any spiritual office, would have been the means of supplying their bodily wants without their being at all burdensome to the church, if all they had been to do were occasionally to visit the flock, and attend at the meeting of their brethren an hour before the work of the day began, or after it was ended, which, according to Eubulus, could not re-

quire any interruption of secular pursuits, to assist at the celebration of the Lord's supper, and to deliver a few brief instructions---or that, if they were, and were thereby thrown upon the bounty of the church for their subsistence, in return for so small a service, it would not have been warmly objected to, as a thing highly unreasonable and oppressive?

Perhaps Eubulus may say, that an objection of this kind was started against the apostles in the Corinthian church, as he may think it implied by Paul's question, *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?* 1 Cor. ix. 11 But the apostle's reply in the words immediately following is founded on their concession, that others had a right to share in their carnal things, or at least in their readily consenting that they should do so, *If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather?* However, he chose himself to wave the exercise of his right, that he might not hinder the success of the gospel. It therefore appears to be very evident, that the first christians submitted to have public teachers established among them with the incumbrance of providing for their support, though the apostles had no worldly power to force them to such a submission; and from this circumstance it is highly probable, that the service performed by those teachers was something more than administering the Lord's supper, and giving some brief instructions, at the beginning or close of a day, the rest of which was employed in temporal affairs.

Farther, Paul tells Timothy, 2 epist. ch. ii. ver. 4. that *no man, that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life*: from which he would have him infer, that *he* ought to have nothing to do with worldly business. And that not only an evangelist, which Timothy was, but likewise all who preached the gospel, were to act in the same manner, may be concluded from the apostle's comparing those who preached the gospel, with those who under the law *ministered about holy things, and waited at the altar*, in order to prove that the former were entitled to a livelihood, as were the latter, by virtue of their office, 1 Cor. ix. 13. 14. For his reasoning would have been inconclusive, had not the one been taken off, as were the other, from secular employments. Moreover, the words *live by the gospel* either signified nothing, or that the persons, of whom they were spoken, were to derive the whole of their subsistence from preaching the gospel, without gaining a part of it by other means. Now, is it at all likely, that the apostle, who preferred death to parting with that glory, to which he conceived himself entitled for having preached the gospel *gratis* to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. ix. 15. would have himself acquiesced in, much less have countenanced, the institution of an order of persons in the church to be maintained by its bounty, and asserted the expedience, if not necessity, of their abstaining from all worldly pursuits, merely that they might be at liberty to spend an hour once a week to promote the religious and moral improvement,

of their fellow-christians, and that at a time, when the engagements of business would have been otherwise suspended? Did they want all the rest of the week to prepare for the discharge of so short a service; or was it more inconsistent with the nature of *their* office, than with the *superior one* of an apostle, to work with their hands to get a living?

No doubt, the end to be answered by their keeping themselves free from the entanglements of the affairs of this life was, that they might devote their time to *reading and study*, agreeably to the apostle's charge to Timothy, that they might be *scribes well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, able rightly to divide the word of truth*, capable of guiding the devotions of the people, and thus qualified for performing, with propriety and usefulness, services which occupied a much larger portion of a certain day than Eubulus supposes to have been then employed in any public acts of a religious nature. And I remark, that this day must have been *the Lord's day*, when christians met to commemorate his death, and not the Jewish sabbath; since it is not supposable, that the elders were allowed to discharge the duties, which it hath been already shewn they were appointed to discharge, in *synagogues*, unless all the Jews, who assembled in them, were become converts to christianity, which *probably* was not *any where, certainly not every where*, the case, where elders were ordained.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews (probably Paul) in his charge to those to whom

he wrote, not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, x. 25. and James, in forbidding a preference to be shewn to persons, who came into their assembly with a gold ring and in goodly apparel, ii. 2. are, if I mistake not, generally thought, and on good grounds, to refer to the public meetings then held by christians on the Lord's day for social worship. These writers, from the very nature of the subjects they wrote about, can be supposed to speak of none but *religious* meetings, and in no other meetings of that kind could christians have a right to manage but such as consisted of christians. These, therefore, were the meetings which the writer to the Hebrews enjoined them not to forsake, and in which James forbids any partiality to be discovered: And as christians confessedly met on the first day to commemorate the death of their Lord, it was no doubt to the meetings held on that occasion, that both referred.

Peter, speaking of the views with which elders ought to take the oversight of the flock, says, that they should do it *not for filthy lucre's sake, but of a ready mind*, 1 Eph. v. 2. i. e. that worldly gain should not be their leading object in undertaking their office. From hence it also appears, that there were elders, that Peter approved of the institution of such an order of men, and that they were in some way or other rewarded by their flocks for their labours among them; from all which the same inferences follow as have been already deduced from the same circumstances mentioned by Paul.

Upon an impartial review of the evidence now produced, I cannot but think it sufficient to prove, that a day was set apart every week in the times of the apostles for religious purposes, that this day was *the Lord's day*; and that no worldly business was done upon it.

To prove that the Lord's day was observed in the same strictly religious manner in the following ages, prior to the days of Constantine, I have no need to quote passages from the writers of that period of time, this being already done to my hands by several, to some of whom I beg leave to refer. See particularly Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. 5. p. 263 to 266, ed. 9. King's Enquiry into the Constitution, &c. of the Primitive Church, pt. 2. where any one may see not only numerous proofs of the observance of the Lord's day, but also an account of the religious duties performed in the church in the first ages. Dr. Whitby on 1 Cor. xvi. 2. With respect to what was done in the church on the Lord's day, see also Dr. Benson's Essay, annexed to his Paraphrase on 2 Tim.

Though what I have now advanced be, according to my present opinion, enough to vindicate the practice of christians in observing a day of religious rest, from the charge of being superstitious, yet it may not be amiss to examine Eubulus's objections to this practice, one by one, that nothing he hath said may be left unanswered. This I may do in a future paper. if you will give me leave, and I should not find it done before by some other person.

I am, Gentlemen, &c. &c.

PHILANDER.

In Continuation.

I Now proceed, according to the intimation in my former paper, to examine the objections of Eubulus. That Gentleman says, that “an institution (of a day of cessation from all worldly business) cannot be productive of any valuable ends, but such as are easily to be attained without it.” p. 14. Were the valuable ends, to be answered by the institution of the sabbath among the Jews, as easily attainable without it? If they *were*, what will Eubulus say to vindicate the divine wisdom in such an appointment? If they were *not*, what should render them attainable among christians, without their devoting one day of the week to religious exercises? Are christians differently constituted from Jews, or not susceptible of like impressions from sensible objects, and the engagements of business and pleasure? If this cannot be asserted with truth, as I presume it cannot, is not our withdrawing our attention from secular affairs during one day in seven, and transferring it to concerns of an infinitely more important nature, as expedient for us as it was for the Jews? Eubulus represents “a very small part of the great bulk of the people as having either inclination or *ability*, to employ the weekly returns of sabbatical idleness in what are called religious exercises and meditations,” p. 23. If the greater part of the mass of the people be neither inclined nor *able* to act

in this manner on a day in which law and custom oblige them to suspend their worldly pursuits, and they in general entertain an apprehension, though it do not properly influence their practice, that it ought to be spent in a religious manner, can there be any ground to expect, that they would be more disposed, or more able to dedicate a single hour of it, with greater seriousness and advantage, to religious employments, when they did not think themselves obliged to keep the whole of any day at all in a religious manner; and when through the rest of the first, and all the other days of the week, their minds were occupied with worldly affairs? Can one train of thoughts, continued by an unremitted attention to one particular set of objects for a long time together be dismissed, and a quite different one introduced, at will, and in an instant? At least, is it in the power of any besides the very few, who *habitually* maintain a pious frame of mind, to make so sudden a transition? This I take to be contrary to the law which universally operates in regulating the succession of our ideas, and to general experience.

Eubulus, supposing that “the institution of a day of rest from all worldly business---induces a very large majority of the most useful and most numerous part of the people, to mispend the seventh part of their time,” p. 14, seems to insinuate, that there must be, in the very *nature* of such an institution, a tendency to produce this unhappy consequence. I think, he must therefore arraign the wisdom of ap-

pointing a sabbath to the Jews, which, however, he does not appear inclined to do, as he seems to allow, that it was from God, and that christians would be bound to comply with a like institution, could such be proved to have been established among *them* by divine authority. Nevertheless, I do not see how he can avoid taking this step, unless he can shew, that there is such a difference between the circumstances of Jews and christians, as that such an institution among the former *could not*, but among the latter *must* have a bad tendency, which is not to be compensated by any benefit that can arise from it. It is not the circumstance of the Jews having been promised, that if they duly obeyed their law, their land should be fruitful, and of christians having no such promise, and that therefore the former might safely abstain from rural business for one day in seven, whereas the latter cannot, which could make a sabbatical rest safe to the one, while it would be dangerous to the other, in a *moral view*; since in both cases alike the institution of such a rest must occasion the idleness, from which Eubulus apprehends the bad tendency of it to arise. It is also proper to be observed, that Eubulus, both here and in other places, argues the disuse of a thing from the abuse of it; a mode of reasoning which, if it were fair and conclusive, would prove in many instances too much, as hath been frequently remarked.

Eubulus says, that “without a positive injunction the strict observance of a sabbatical

rest is merely superstition." With such superstition, however (if their practice must be called such) I have shewn in my former paper that the apostles and first christians were chargeable. But the practice of the apostles must be a full justification of the present one of christians on the general grounds, on which their uniform conduct in any other instance challenges imitation.

It is inconceivable that Paul, who commanded his disciples to be followers of him, should not be aware, that christians would draw his conduct, and that of the other apostles, in so important an article as the observance of a day of religious rest, into a precedent, and that he and they would not therefore have taken care to guard them against so doing by a particular caution, had they entertained an idea, that under the christian dispensation *no* day of the week was to be religiously kept. Jesus and his apostles observed the Jewish sabbath, though not with the superstitious regard of Pharisees, which would have prevented them from doing acts of beneficence upon it. Had they thought, that not only that, but every other day of the week ought to be employed by christians in worldly business, would they not have dropped some intimation at least, that they fell into a compliance with the established custom of their country, merely as a temporary expedient for propagating the gospel among the Jews with the greater success; but that, when the expedient had produced all its effect, a discrimination of days ought to be entirely laid aside?

Perhaps Eubulus may observe that, according to my reasoning, christians ought to keep the Jewish sabbath, which very few of them are found to do. But I do not see how he can draw this consequence from it with respect to any besides Jewish converts at the most; which subject I leave to be discussed between him and Hermas. If such a consequence can be established with respect to *them*, it would be strange indeed, that the example of Jesus and his apostles should not carry with it the least shadow of authority with respect to the *rest* of their followers. The spirit and intention of an example may demand the highest regard, where there may be no apparent obligation to do the very same thing, that the person who sets the example hath done before. Jesus washed the disciples feet; yet we do not think ourselves bound to do the very same thing, though we allow, that this conduct of our Lord obliges us to be humble, and to condescend to the performance of any kind offices for one another: Jesus was a whole night in a *προσευχη*, where he doubtless employed all the time, either in direct addresses to his father, or in religious meditation, or in both. This cannot oblige his followers to spend whole nights in devotion in places appropriate for that purpose, though it certainly ought to induce them to cherish that devout frame of mind, which will qualify them for the proper discharge of the duty of prayer at stated times, and of any extraordinary acts of devotion, which peculiar circumstances may require. Jesus fed thousands at a time

by miracle: it is impossible for us to do the like; yet his relieving in this manner the wants of his attendants, as well as every other display of his benevolence, powerfully recommends to his followers the cultivation of a similar temper, and the exercise of it in acts of kindness. In short, different circumstances and situations, which do not at all diminish the obligation to follow a worthy pattern, may yet admit of great latitude as to the *manner, time, and instances*, in which a person is bound to do it. Though therefore the observance of the Jewish sabbath by our Lord and his apostles may not lay us under any obligation to keep *that* day, yet as it gave a sanction to the appointment, of *one* day of the week for rest from bodily labour and religious exercises, it is plain, that they approved of *some* such appointment, and that they conceived, that without it religion would not be able to keep its ground in the world. If this had not been the apprehension of our Lord, but, on the contrary, that the direct tendency and inevitable effect of a sabbatical rest would be the corruption of the morals of his followers, and that every valuable purpose of such a rest might be much more easily and certainly obtained, without the suspension of worldly business for a whole day once a week, we could not reconcile it with the idea of his being a wise and benevolent legislator, to suppose that he would not only have neglected to enjoin an alteration of so dangerous a practice, but also have left it in the enjoyment of all the countenance and support, which the au-

thority of his example could give it. But if he saw such a practice to be important, and even essential for the preservation of religion among mankind, it is easy to account for his giving no express command to his followers, to set apart the first, or any other day of the week for religious exercises, in preference to the rest, as he might not think it material *which* day they kept; and not having the most distant apprehension, that, after what they had seen him do, and had been themselves accustomed from infancy to do, they would think themselves at liberty to keep *no* day at all, he might suppose that he could safely leave the *choice* of the day to the judgement of his apostles and first disciples. And if these were our Lord's ideas, he may fairly be supposed to have been so far from judging an express command to sanctify some *particular* day requisite, as Eubulus thinks, that he might regard such a command as superfluous.

Eubulus's assertion, p. 16, that "the apostles and first disciples of Jesus Christ, are no where said to have distinguished the first day of the week in any manner whatsoever," hath been already shewn in my former paper to disagree with facts. In the twentieth chapter of John, to which Eubulus refers, we find that the disciples assembled on the day of Christ's resurrection, and again on that day se'nnight; and though it were ever so clear, that they met only to confer about the testimony of their Lord's resurrection, it would be of very little consequence to the cause of Eubu-

lus, while there remains such abundant evidence besides, that it was afterwards their custom to assemble on that day, for religious purposes. But with respect to the second of the meetings recorded in that chapter, it is by no means so plain, that the disciples had no business together, but to talk about the evidence of their Lord's being risen. Between the time of that and the former meeting, a week had intervened, during which, as they must have had several opportunities of conversing on that subject, it is very improbable, that they then came together *merely* to renew such conversation. I should rather conjecture, that all the apostles, except Thomas, being convinced of the resurrection of their Lord, their second meeting was held in part at least, to commemorate that most important event, and that from this meeting is to be dated the commencement of the christian custom of solemnizing the Lord's day.

Eubulus thinks that the meeting spoken of Acts xx. 7. was evidently in the very beginning of the first day of the week, i. e. in the evening, after the business of the preceding day was over; or, as he elsewhere observes, according to the Jewish computation, in the evening of the Jewish sabbath; or our Saturday, and that it is probable, the disciples were then met to participate of the Lord's supper, p. 17. In p. 25, he seems to intimate, that the rite of the supper was celebrated in the *evening* of the Lord's day, and to assign that as a reason why the celebration of it should not interfere with the

usual hours of business. How are the representations in these two passages to be reconciled? But not to dwell on this apparent inconsistency, I would ask, where is there the least proof that the meeting under consideration was in the evening of the seventh day. I can find none in the history. But if we reflect that Paul hastened, if it were *possible* for him (attend to the force of these words), to be at Jerusalem the day of pentecost, ver. 16, we shall see reason to suppose, that Paul tarried several days at Troas, in order to meet the disciples of that place on the Lord's day, and keep it with them according to their custom, before he proceeded on his journey. And if this was the case, he must leave Troas early on the morning of Monday. See Wolfii. Cur. Phil. Dr. Whitby in Loc. and Dr. Benson's history of the first planting of christianity. b. 3. ch. 7. sect. 9.

The next passage quoted by Eubulus is 1 Cor. xvi. 2. in which the apostle says not a syllable about settling accounts; but merely orders the Corinthian converts to lay by, or throw into a common stock, what they could afford for the relief of the saints at Jerusalem; to prevent the trouble of making a collection when he should come to receive their bounty. They had no need to examine into their gains on the Lord's day, to see what part of them they could conveniently employ in charity. That they could easily do at any time before the day came, on which the collection was to be made.

Eubulus having considered all the passages

(as he thinks, but which I have shewn in my former paper, to be by no means the case) “ which even by inference recommend the “ keeping the first day of the week sacred as a “ sabbath day,” adds, “ there are others which “ expressly teach us that the gospel does not re- “ quire of its disciples any such observance,” and he grounds his assertion first on the apostolic decree mentioned Acts xv. This decree was occasioned in the following manner. Certain persons had gone from Judea to Antioch, and taught the brethren of that place, that they must be circumcised in order to be saved, ver. 1. Between those persons and Paul and Barnabas, there arose so great a dissension, that it was thought necessary to send the latter to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, to take their opinion upon the subject in dispute. Accordingly the question was brought on, and agitated in a council convened there for the purpose, and their decision is well known. Now if we consider what gave origin to the decree, viz. the dispute that had arisen at Antioch, whether the gentile converts ought to be circumcised, and what was the end which the fabricators of it had in view, viz. to remove obstructions to fraternal union between them and the Jewish converts, I think we shall readily perceive, that it was intended to enjoin only those things, which the gentile converts might be in danger of not otherwise attending to, and of thereby giving unnecessary offence to the Jewish ; leaving the former at full liberty to act in concert with the latter in all cases wherein their chris-

tian freedom was not concerned, and there was a consent of opinions between the two parties. If this be admitted, the gentile converts might keep a weekly sabbatical rest, without offending against the spirit or design of this decree, or resigning any right enjoyed by their christian profession. That they had no idea of their being forbidden by the decree to observe such a rest, is evident from what hath been shewn to have been their practice in this respect. And indeed, had they distinguished no day of the week from the rest, by keeping it sacred, and abstaining from worldly business, supposing themselves to be released by the Jerusalem council from all obligation to do so, there can be no doubt but that, considering the zeal of the Jewish converts for the law, we should have heard of their frequently censuring such a conduct, which must have appeared to them highly criminal. But where do we meet with any thing of the sort?

Though it be allowed, that “to say that only such and such particulars of a law are necessary to be observed, is plainly and expressly to declare that every other particular is unnecessary,” it must also be granted, that it is to indulge a *liberty* with respect to those *other* particulars of the law, and to permit the observance of *such* of them as are not otherwise forbidden by the authority which enjoins the observance of certain particulars of it. That the council of Jerusalem were of this opinion, appears from the subsequent behaviour of the apostles, and particularly from that of Paul,

who afterwards circumcised Timothy at the very time when he was employed in delivering the decrees in various cities, and who attended the worship of the synagogue on the sabbath days. Acts xvi. beginning, xvii. 2. xxi. 24.

I beg leave also to remark, with respect to the articles contained in the decree (that relating to *fornication* excepted, which is forbidden by the divine law, whether communicated by the light of reason or of revelation) that they seem to have been framed merely to preserve harmony between the Jewish and gentile converts, and not to be binding in future, when the peace of the church should no longer require the observance of them. After the several articles are enumerated, it is added, *From which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well.* This language appears to me to shew plainly, that all the injunctions, except the one concerning fornication, were founded on maxims of prudence, which affected the then state of things, and that they were not intended to bind christians in future ages, when if they should be no longer regarded, there would be no danger of a schism in the church becoming the consequence. To the idea just suggested, relating to the continuance of the obligation of the decree, the determination of our Lord, which must have been known to the apostles, that *what entereth into the man cannot defile the man*, and the observations of Paul about the eating of things offered to idols, (1 Cor. viii.) also lead. Now, if what is here advanced be well founded, we shall see sufficient reason for the observance of

a sabbatical rest not being prescribed in the decree, viz. because with respect to that matter there was no disagreement between the two sorts of converts, and because the obligation to such an observance would remain, when that to the observance of other particulars of the decree would cease:

I would farther take notice, that the reason assigned by James, to whose opinion the council acceded, for the injunctions he proposed to have laid on the gentile converts, shews, that they did not intend by their decision to prohibit the observance of a sabbatical rest, and that the decree itself implies the existence of a religious intercourse and communion between the two sorts of converts. The words of James alluded to, are, *For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.* The reason contained in these words implies, that the Jewish converts continued to attend the synagogues on the sabbath-day, and convey no censure of their conduct in their so doing. If, on their reception of christianity, they had withheld, or been ordered to withhold, their attendance at those places on that day, where would have been the pertinence of observing, that Moses was then read in them? James's reason is evidently founded on the supposition, that they did still assemble with the Jews on their sabbath, and by this means their attachment to the law was still kept up, which rendered it necessary for their christian brethren from among the gentiles to conform, in the instances specified in the decree, to their practice.

But this conformity could only be needful on the supposition that the Jewish and gentile converts were incorporated into one body, and at stated times met together to join in the same religious exercises. For had there not subsisted a religious union of this sort between them, and the object of the decree had been only to preserve an intercourse and friendship of a *civil* nature between them, the decree would have been superfluous, as such an object might have been as easily and effectually secured with respect to these two bodies of people as with respect to either of them and those who were without the pale of the christian church, by means of kind and courteous behaviour. Col. iv. 5. 1 Theff. iv. 12. I, therefore, think, that we are constrained to infer from the decree, and the reason assigned for passing it, that the Jewish converts attended the synagogues on the sabbath, that they were not blamed for so doing, and that between them and the gentile converts there subsisted a church-union of great importance, in the estimation of the apostles, to the cause of christianity and their own religious improvement, and therefore highly proper to be maintained. And as we have seen distinct evidence from the scriptures, that the Lord's day was kept sacred in the first age of the church, this decree instead of forbidding such a practice, is a proof that it enjoyed the approbation of the apostles; in as much as they thought it requisite to order the gentile converts to avoid certain things, which would give umbrage to their brethren converted from

judaism, and produce a separation between them in their social and public worship.

Eubulus, secondly, grounds his assertion, that the gospel does not require of its professors the observance of any thing like a sabbatical rest, on the design of Paul's epistle to the Galatians. I readily allow, that the object of the apostle in this letter was to prove, that the gentile converts were not required to observe any of the Jewish ordinances. But how it can be concluded from thence, either that they did not keep one day of the week sacred, or that they should look upon themselves as exempted from all obligation to do any thing of the kind, I do not perceive. That the primitive christians did *actually* observe the first day of the week in a religious manner, hath been already shewn; and the Galatians would have drawn a very strange inference, if, because they had been told, that they were not bound to observe, among other Mosaic institutions, that of the *Jewish* sabbath, they had considered themselves as not obliged to keep *any* day of the week holy. Their being pronounced free from the yoke of Jewish ceremonies could not have been fairly construed to mean, that they would sacrifice their christian liberty, or act inconsistently with it, by observing the day on which their Lord rose from the dead, and which the apostles themselves had distinguished by marks of peculiar regard. Therefore, when Paul tells the Galatians, that he was afraid of having bestowed upon them labour in vain, because they observed days, and months, and times, and

years, he could be fairly understood by them to do no more than express his disapprobation of their unnecessarily encumbering themselves with the observance of institutions, to which, as gentile converts they could be under no obligation to submit. Would a protestant church in a country of heathens, where there were also persons of the popish profession, conclude on receiving from the man by whom they had been converted, a letter, containing exhortations, that they would not suffer themselves to be prevailed on by their popish neighbours to join them in the observance of fasts and festivals not prescribed by their religion, that their friend ordered or wished them not to sanctify any day at all, when such a practice was recommended by his own conduct, and followed by the christian world in general?

Upon the whole, I think we must suppose, that there was an irreconcilable disagreement between the practice and language of Paul, or a most unaccountable want of any thing like system in his way of thinking, or of attention in his mode of writing, unless it be allowed, that in the passages in which he reasons on the impropriety of the gentile converts adopting Jewish ordinances, he had not the most distant reference to the sanctification of a christian sabbath.

That the reader may see how ill-founded is the observation of Eubulus, that the christians of the three first centuries did not observe any day as a sabbath, p. 20, 21, nothing more is necessary than to refer him to the authors be-

fore quoted; to whom may be added Joseph Mede, from whose discourse concerning churches, or appropriate places of christian worship, it seems evident, that from the days of the apostles such a day hath been kept. I refer to him only as producing evidence of the existence of places of public worship, and of what was done in them in the first ages of the church; from which the conclusion appears to be just, that one day of the week was then kept holy. Direct proofs of this may be seen in the other authors referred to. See Mede's Works, b. ii.

Eubulus asserts, but says nothing to prove, that Abraham and the patriarchs kept no sabbath. Directly the reverse I apprehend to have been asserted by many learned men, who have endeavoured to prove, that one day in seven hath been set apart for religious purposes from the beginning of the world. But not to enter into the discussion of this subject, which doth not appear to have much, if any connexion, with the present dispute, I proceed to observe, that, if the first christians, as Eubulus says, met early in the morning, or in the evening, it was probably for fear of their enemies; but that, as often as they could do it with safety, they employed other parts of the Lord's day in the public services of religion. For the proof of this fact I must beg leave to refer the reader as before.

It is well known, that people who live in villages and country places, are the last to change their opinions and practices. This circumstance will furnish a much better reason

than that assigned by Eubulus for Constantine's not extending his order to suspend their worldly business on the Lord's day to those places, p. 22. If the views of that prince were entirely political, his conduct may much more justly be ascribed to a dread of exciting discontents. The reason given by Eubulus for this conduct of Constantine is so expressed, that it may lead an unwary reader to think much more favourably of it than it deserves. He represents Constantine, as "providently apprehending, that the suppression of agriculture and other rural occupations for *one seventh* of the year might in some seasons be, at least locally, attended with very fatal consequences." A reader, who runs over this passage in great haste, and without reflecting, may inadvertently conceive this seventh part of the year to mean one *connected* period. It is true, he must read with very little attention not to correct his mistake immediately; but if he did correct it, I think he must at once discover the improbability of Constantine's having acted with the view ascribed to him by Eubulus. This thought would at once suggest itself to his mind, that if Constantine, for any reason whatever, chose to enjoin on mechanics, manufacturers, &c. in cities and large towns, the suspension of business one day in seven, by which they would be deprived of one seventh part of their gains, he might easily have obviated the objection, which his subjects in country places were likely to make on account of the fatal consequences, which Eubulus supposes him to have been

aware of, by inserting a proviso in his decree, that, to preserve the fruits of the earth in precarious seasons, they should be permitted to work on the Lord's day. But what could have induced this prince to have enjoined a sabbatical rest on *any* part of his subjects, seeing he would thereby deprive the community of the benefit of a seventh part of their labour, and the persons themselves of the same proportion of their gains, if he had not found such an institution subsisting among christians? If he wished to pay his court to the clergy, and to secure their attachment, he might have easily obtained that end without increasing their duty. If the christian laity had been accustomed to pay stipends to their ministers for the short service of an hour at the beginning or close of one day in the week, the rest of which they employed in worldly business and had no idea of the sacredness of one day above another, would it have been political in the prince, or likely to be pleasing to his people, to introduce among them a weekly sabbatical rest, by which they would be deprived of a part of their usual gettings, and which they had not before been taught to consider themselves as bound to keep? I am, therefore, fully of opinion, that Eubulus ascribes the conduct of Constantine to a wrong cause, and that his enjoining at all the observance of a weekly rest argues, that he found such a custom among christians, and, for some reason or other, wished to make it as general in his empire, as he thought he could do it with safety.

Part of what Eubulus says, p. 23, is perfectly just; but I cannot agree with him, that, because the religion of the gospel ought to influence the minds, and direct the practice of its professors in every action and moment of their lives, the appointment of any *particular* days or seasons for religious meditation is superfluous and unnecessary. The quite contrary inference appears to me the only just one, and for reasons founded on the state of things, which he proceeds to describe. For if, as Eubulus represents, a very small part of the great bulk of the people be inclined to employ the day of sabbatical rest in religious exercises and meditations, now that it enjoys the countenance of law and general custom and opinion, is there the least shadow of probability, that, if they pursued their business and pleasures every day of the week, they would feel more of a religious temper? Is it not evidently the influence of such pursuits for six days, not duly counteracted by private meditation and devotion, that tends to disqualify them for the religious exercises of the seventh? What less, then, could be expected from their being engaged *every* day in those pursuits, without having their attention called for a considerable portion of one day in the week to religious and moral subjects, than the total extirpation of all pious and virtuous feelings from their minds, and the most alarming licentiousness in their manners? Could they indeed be prevailed on steadily to perform the religious duties of the closet and family, and uniformly to govern

their thoughts, affections, and actions, by the rules of the gospel, without keeping a fab-batical rest, the duty of observing such an institution, as far as it arises from the religious and moral tendency of such a conduct, would be superseded. But upon what grounds can such an event be expected?

Suppose the alteration, pleaded for by Eubulus were adopted, would the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life be abated? Would the man now enslaved to either of those lusts, be likely, when he had more time and additional opportunities for indulging it, to become less so, to perform with more frequency or fervour the devotion of the closet or the family than he does at present, or to attend public worship for an hour twice or thrice a week, with more constancy or benefit than he does now the services of the church on the Lord's day? All just reasoning from the state of things in the world, and the constitution of the human mind forbids the hope of such events. And it appears to me exceedingly strange, that Eubulus should not have been aware, that, in proportion as his scheme would allow more time for the pursuit of business and pleasure, it would render mankind more worldly-minded and sensual, and thereby more disinclined and unable to engage in religious exercises at *any* time.

As to the model of prayer taught by our Lord, it is evident from the occasion on which it was prescribed, and his direction to his disciples to enter into their closets to pray, that

it was designed to guide them as to the subjects of their private devotions, though it contains no subject improper to be introduced into public devotions. The command of the apostle, that prayers should be made for kings, and for all in authority, taken in connexion with the end to be answered by making them, plainly relates in a more peculiar manner to public worship.

I entirely agree with Eubulus in opinion, that the present mode of preaching is not systematical enough; and I doubt not, but that it would prove a very useful alteration, to substitute regular and connected expositions of the scriptures in the place of sermons on one part of the Lord's day. Perhaps, as christians have been always accustomed to hear sermons, it would be improper, for that and other reasons, to lay aside the use of them entirely.

From what hath been before observed, I think it must be evident to all, who will give themselves the trouble to reflect, that the abolition of a sabbatical rest, instead of diminishing, would greatly increase the number of executions.----There is not the least reason for supposing, that fewer would be idle, expensive, and dissolute, or that the obligations to diligence, sobriety, justice, and honesty, would be more generally felt and attended to, but the contrary. The motives which now determine the unhappy creatures, who fall victims to public justice, to pursue those courses which bring them to an untimely end, would probably operate with still greater force, and extend

their influence to many others, who now resist and overcome their power. For so little would there be left of the appearance of religion in the world, and so much more disinclined would the generality be to cherish its principles in their minds, in consequence of being so entirely immersed in worldly business and pleasure, that the vicious would grow more hardened in iniquity, and their proselytes become daily more and more numerous.

Eubulus, after having allowed, that the institution of sabbath schools will certainly be of benefit, informs us, that that benefit will be of very short duration; for that, when young people have ceased to attend those schools, they will soon be blended with the general mass of the people of their own rank, and be assimilated to them. Should, then, no care be taken to instil good principles into the minds of children, because early impressions may afterwards be effaced? Are there not some instances to justify the observation, *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it?* As I hope and trust, that Eubulus is right in his apprehension, that “his reasoning will have but a small chance of success in a conflict with the inveterate universal prejudice in favour of a sabbatical rest,” so I flatter myself, that the good effects already seen to be produced by Sunday schools will cause them to be established every where throughout the kingdom,

Many observations might be added to recommend the continuance of the practice con-

demned by Eubulus. If what I have written should be thought a full answer to that Gentleman, who appears to be a well wisher to the interests of virtue, and should draw a more general attention to the duty of observing the Lord's day, it will be a full recompence for the labour of,

Gentlemen, &c. &c.

PHILANDER.

Remarks on Eubulus.

To the DIRECTORS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

THE subject discussed by Eubulus has often appeared to me to have its peculiar difficulties, and I was glad to see his remarks upon it, though they militate against the common opinion and practice, and my own prepossessions. For I promised myself, that they would call the attention of some able judge to the question, and produce that rational, liberal investigation, which to me it appeared to need. The observations, judiciously urged, and fully stated by Philander, have prevented my suffering a disappointment. But as I am of opinion that the subject is not exhausted by his pen, I request leave to introduce into your publication some further thoughts upon it.

SUBSIDIARIUS.

EUBULUS seems to confound the observation of the Lord's day with a Jewish sabbath, as if the former necessarily involved in it the latter.

With respect to the latter a cessation from all worldly business was the first and leading object of it; and this does not appear to be justly said of the Lord's day. The law of the Jewish sabbath, was in the first instance a law of rest; and the injunction to keep an holy convocation was subsequent and secondary. The hints given us, in the New Testament, concerning the Lord's day, lead us to consider its primary design to be, to do honour to the Lord, by employing it in christian worship. Now the giving a day to one particular pursuit or employment discriminates and marks that day: and implieth the detaching it from all other engagements. A rest from labour, in the case of the Lord's day, though not the primary design of it, will of course be the consequence of devoting it to sacred uses. Yet that rest may not be so strict and rigorous as to give it the air of a Jewish sabbath, or to entitle it to be considered as one: for which, as Eubulus observes, there is no positive precept in the New Testament. So that this view of the subject establishes a clear and important distinction between a Jewish sabbath and a Lord's day. The latter is, what I conceive, christians are concerned to defend.

The question therefore is, upon what authority should christians, really influenced by their religion, distinguish one day out of seven by this title and by acts of social devotion?

Here let it be observed, that an allowance should be made for the different modes, by which a divine sanction is derived to the rites

of the Old and New Testament. The former constitute part of a code of laws, laid down with great precision, authoritatively defined by the words of the legislator, and assigned to certain periods of time, and to certain descriptions of men. The latter, at least in the full extent and with regard to every particular application, are not the subject of explicit, set, and formal laws: but are incidentally introduced, as facts or events gave occasion, and wear more the appearance of *customs* than *injunctions*. The reason of this difference in the mode of promulgation may be supposed to be this: the former were appointed to a people, at one time, separated from the world, and formed into a peculiar, religious, and political body. The latter were to be practised by those who were still to continue in their secular and worldly connexions. *There* a nation was concerned: *Here* only a few individuals, as they were, singly or in small parties, brought over to the christian faith; but in other respects were blended with the mass to which they originally belonged. The ritual of the Jews was at once completely formed and established: the christian ritual was gradually to gain ground and to insinuate itself, as opportunity permitted. Thus they are handed down to us, as *customs* which incidentally arose, and gradually spread.

E. G. We are assured "that Christ and his
 "Apostles baptized many Jews in his life
 "time: John iii. 22. iv. 1, 2. Yet the evan-
 "gelists do not give us an account of the in-

“stitution of this baptism. The institution we
 “we read, Matt. xxviii. 19. was of baptism
 “for the nations, or the Gentiles, long after
 “the forementioned baptism for the Jews that
 “believed in Christ*.” Thus also we find by
 the case of the Corinthians, and by several
 passages in the Acts, that the Lord’s sup-
 per was adopted by every church and observed
 by all converts to the gospel; yet the first in-
 junction, *strictly* explained, extended only to that
 company of disciples with which Christ first
 eat it. But this practice of the first christian
 churches, especially as corroborated by the
 republication of the ordinance, 1 Cor. vi. 23.
 &c. shews that it was meant to carry with it
 an universal and perpetual obligation. We may
 conclude, therefore, that they acted upon the
 injunction of Christ, though that injunction
 be not expressly recorded. “So the Lord’s
 “day may be a divine institution, though we
 “have not in the gospel an account of the
 “particular time when it was first appointed.
 “It is natural enough to suppose, that it was
 “after Christ’s resurrection, when he spake
 “to the apostles of the things pertaining to
 “the kingdom of God†.”

Eubulus however asserts, “that the apos-
 “les and first disciples of Jesus Christ, are no
 “where said to have distinguished the first day
 “of the week in any manner whatsoever.”
 The passages usually alleded, as proofs that
 the first day of the week was not only distin-

* Hallet’s notes and observations, vol. iii. p. 173.

† Id. p. 173.

guished from other days by the first christians, but distinguished by acts of worship, are quoted by him? but he judges them to be totally inconclusive to the purpose for which they are alleged. And one passage in the Revelations, it is to be observed, is entirely omitted by him.

The first text, John xx. 19. 26. it must be granted, does not specify the end for which the disciples were assembled together. It might be, as he supposes, merely to confer together on the testimony and evidence of their master's resurrection: but, as this fact was not fully ascertained to their conviction, their meeting could not be in honour of it. The other texts, notwithstanding what Eubulus has offered to invalidate their force, appear to me clear and satisfactory

Acts xx. 7. deserves particular attention. *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples were come together to break bread, Paul preached unto them (ready to depart on the morrow) and continued his speech unto midnight.* This passage, in my opinion, is full and explicit. It asserts the repetition of a general custom, of which without calling a meeting, Paul availed himself, that he might preach unto them. "And
 " by assembling with them, and preaching to
 " them, at that time Paul approved of their
 " custom, and recommended it to us. If they
 " had done wrong in keeping up this custom,
 " Paul would have shewn his dislike of it, as
 " he always honestly did on all such occasions:
 " witness his reproofing the Corinthians for

“ the ill customs crept in amongst them : and
 “ his blaming Peter to the face. Gal. ii. 11.—
 “ 14.*”

The next passage is 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. *Now as concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, so even do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come.* Mr. Locke's remark here is pertinent and forcible.

“ It is certain, that the apostle directs, that
 “ they should every Lord's day bring to the
 “ congregation what their charity had laid aside
 “ the foregoing week, as their gain came in,
 “ that there it might be put into some public
 “ box appointed for that purpose, or officer's
 “ hands. For if they had only laid it aside at
 “ home, there would nevertheless be need of a
 “ collection, when he came.” It may be added,
 that “ when the apostle told the church what
 “ they should do, when for the *time to come*,
 “ they should meet for worship on the Lord's
 “ day ; he did as good as order them to per-
 “ sist in this custom of observing this day in
 “ this religious manner †.”

The last passage in Rev. i. 10. *I was in the spirit on the Lord's day.* It is obvious, that this title marks one day above the rest : and which that day was is apparent from the uniform practice of the christians who lived next after the apostles, of applying this name to the first day of the week. Mr. Hallet, from parallel passages, in which the title *the Lord's* is applied

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* Hallet, ut supra. p. 181, 182. † Hallet, p. 185.

to any thing, has shewn that it not only indicates something set apart to the honour of Christ, but also an appointment of his.

These passages, it must be allowed, are few, very few; only three: yet on the authority of these few texts, is it supposed that an institution, reaching to all churches and to all ages, doth depend; and, as I apprehend, the conclusion is made with propriety and weight. For, though it appears, that the Lord's day, or the first day of the week, as a day devoted to the honour of the Lord, and to christian worship, is seldom mentioned in the original, authentic records of the first planting of christianity: yet be it observed, the force of the argument in favour of the day does not lie in the *number* of times the mention of it occurs; but in the *manner*, in which it is spoken of. It is mentioned, though incidentally, as a *custom*, as a *fixed* and *regular custom*; as a custom pervading different churches, and different parts of the christian world, Troas, Galatia, and Corinth. Much is implied in such a mention of it. It is tantamount to frequent references to it, to the enumeration of many instances of the observance of it. It comprehends many *instances in one*. The name the *Lord's day*, is very emphatical, and holds forth the general fixed estimation of its nature and design. These testimonies, which prove that this custom was, at the earliest period, introduced into the christian church, and had an extensive spread, are clear and weighty: as appears from the authors to which Philander refers.

But Eubulus doth not see that force in these texts from the Acts and 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. which is commonly ascribed to them. If he means, that they do not prove the observance of a sabbath, strictly and fully, conformable to the rigour of a Jewish sabbath, he is certainly right. But they plainly go to prove, that the first day of the week was distinguished by Christian-worship: and so far at least, by a separation of it from the common pursuits of life. Eubulus indeed asserts, that the meeting spoken of in the “ first of these passages was evidently “ in the very beginning of the first day of the “ week, i. e. in the evening, after the business “ of the preceding day was over. And as the “ historian assures us, that Paul both intended, “ and did actually set out on his journey at break “ of day. This passage of scripture affords us “ a decisive proof that St. Paul had no idea of “ keeping the first day of the week as a sabbath.”

On what principles this is so evident to Eubulus, that sensible writer has not pointed out to us. With just respect for the abilities which in the discussion of this subject, he has discovered, I must say, that the assertion is not only unsupported; but incompatible with the language of the text. The term, the *first day of the week*, *μια των σαββατων*, occurs Mat. xxviii. 1. *In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.* Mark xvi. 1, 2. *And very early in the morning, in the first day of the week, they came to the sepulchre, at the rising of the sun.* Luke xxiv. 1.

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre. John xx. 1. The first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, early, when it was yet dark. These are all the places, besides the two passages under consideration, where we meet with the phrase. And, though the Jewish civil day began at the setting of the sun, yet, in each of these places the phrase denotes that part of the civil day which succeeded to the sun-rising, or the hours of light: which sense of the word *day*, is very common in scripture*.

It would be contrary to the analogy of language to understand it otherwise in the text before us. The *morrow* must stand opposed to *this* sense of the word, *day*, and signify the next period of light, which was Monday: otherwise the writer of the acts would be chargeable with referring, in the same clause to two different measures of time. And the Greek word, *επιούριον*, will, I believe, be always found to stand thus opposed to the meaning of the word, *day*, as signifying the time of light. Besides, as Paul set out on his journey at break of day, the time of his departure according to the computation adopted here by Eubulus, does not agree with the reason assigned for holding the meeting till midnight; which was his eagerness to depart on the morrow. For this day-break, on such computation, was not the *morrow*, of the *first* day of the week, but a *part of that day*, which had commenced the evening before, at sun-setting: the mor-

* See Lardner's Observ. on Dr. Macknight's Harmony, p. 10.

row of *it* did not commence till the succeeding evening.

These are decisive proofs that the christian meeting was held on the Sunday evening, and that Paul's journey was designedly postponed to Monday: proofs, that if he did not keep a jewish sabbath, yet he did not travel on the first day of the week, but to avoid that, submitted to the inconvenience of holding a meeting till midnight, which the calling the christians together, on the preceding evening, at the close of the jewish sabbath, would have prevented.

The historian does not inform us, at *what hour* the disciples came together. It was probably late in the day. The christians, in that early period, could not act as we now do in countries where christianity is established, and where we enjoy the convenience and protection of a national law, prohibiting to the whole body of the people all secular employment on the first day of the week: but they were obliged to hold their religious associations, as their situation permitted. Just as it has always been in times of persecution, and in the infancy of a religious interest: when pious persons adapt the hours and time of their meeting to the necessities of their condition. When these necessities, or difficulties cease, they choose the portions of time for the purpose of their religious association according to the principles, on which they allot the seasons for other transactions. What they did before early in the morning, or late at night, they do then in the full and open day.

This will account, I apprehend, why the observation of the first day of the week for religious and christian worship is spoken of in the writers of the succeeding ages of the church, without any direct mention of a cessation from labours, as what discriminated and occupied the day: till Constantine, finding what was the practice of the christians passed it into a law, and enacted an universal rest from the occupations of life; it may be presumed, to ingratiate himself with so large a body of the people, by a law, which would give the royal sanction to their custom, and screen them from the opposition and insults of their pagan neighbours. Whether Constantine, in this, acted consistently with the attention which he ought to have paid to the rights of his other subjects; whether he acted upon any grounds which the principles of christianity suggests and justifies; or whether any prince, in succeeding ages hath, from the principles of government, justly and liberally explained, much more from the spirit and principles of christianity, any right to debar his subjects, without their consent, of a seventh portion of their time, are questions not connected, I conceive, with the obligations under which conscientious christians lie to set apart to the Lord the first day of the week, and to distinguish it by acts of christian worship. In this respect, as well as in every thing that concerns religion they are to act, not upon human authority, but from the conviction of their own minds, doing what they *do heartily, as to the Lord,*

and *not unto men* ; considering that they serve the Lord Christ.

It appears to me, that Eubulus has not adverted to the distinction, which this question admits, between the duty and obligation lying on christians, I mean sincere and serious christians, to observe the first day of the week to the Lord, and the interference of the magistrate to appoint a day of universal cessation from the occupations of life ; which is only to enforce idleness where he cannot implant piety. To this the New Testament giveth no sanction. But doth it not speak to the *piety* of christians ; to their sense of religion, to their zeal for the christian cause, to their concern for mutual edification, by shewing what the first christians did ? See the first part of Philander's Remarks, and Mr. Hallet's *Discourse on the Lord's Day* ; wherein the observance of it is placed on the proper grounds.

Eubulus, I would further observe does not appear to have taken into consideration the natural obligations to the worship of the Deity, nor many other arguments which his disquisition hath given Philander an opportunity ably and fully to represent. He has not, I conceive, made a due allowance for the natural disposition of the human mind to add the aids of society to every pursuit ; and for the vast importance of those aids to the improvement and comfort of individuals, and to the advancement and support of a common cause. From this disposition, most wisely given to us by our Maker, originate all associations ; our literary

focieties, our academies of ſcience, and our various clubs. Chriſtianity, that moſt benevolent ſyſtem, can never be unfavourable to the exertion of that principle. Under its auſpices, this ſocial propenſity ſhewed itſelf, from the firſt planting of that divine faith, with energy and glory; and wherever the goſpel was received, churches were formed.

Hence, without deriving the obſervation of the Lord's day from the fourth commandment, without extending or perpetuating the obligations of that command, theſe churches fixed on the day of Chriſt's reſurrection for the purpoſes of *their* religious aſſociation: and, if not commanded to do it, were certainly countenanced and ſupported in it, by the apoſtles. A cuſtom, of this antiquity and authority, as well as utility, deſerves to be perpetuated in the churches, and to become a law for all chriſtians through all ages.

To the DIRECTORS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

I Fear the reply I here ſend you to Philander's remarks upon my objections to the inſtitution of a ſabbath amongſt chriſtians may reach you too late for its inſertion in the third number of your ſixth volume. But my attention having been neceſſarily drawn off to other objects, I have not, till now, found leiſure to take notice of that gentleman's two letters, and

can only request the favour of you to give this reply a place in your very useful publication, as soon as it may be convenient.

The observance of a sabbath can be considered only in a political, a moral, and a religious point of view. In each of these I considered it in my former letter: and urged arguments against such an institution, in all these respects, which appeared to me unanswerable, as being founded upon the very nature of things, and confirmed by the experience of fourteen centuries in one part, and by the express testimony of the earliest christian writers in another. And after all that Philander has thought fit to allege against them, as far as I am capable of judging, they still remain in full force.

If it be the best policy in civil magistrates to encourage and excite to the utmost the industry of the people they govern (as it most indisputably is) it is manifest that, to establish an institution which utterly annihilates one-seventh part of the national industry, is exceeding bad policy.

This, indeed, is so obvious an axiom, that Philander does not attempt to controvert it. But he seems to think he has confuted the objections I made to the modern sabbath, considered both in a moral and a religious light. And, what surprized me not a little, his only argument, which can be supposed to have any weight, is founded upon an idea, that, the reason of the institution of the sabbath amongst the Jews, and and of all the severe penalties whereby it was en-

forced was, because the observance was necessary to the moral virtue of that people. If so, why was not that observance, as well as the rite of circumcision, enjoined upon Abraham and all his descendants before Moses? Does Philander think that the great patriarch and his progeny, before their departure out of Egypt, were really more immoral than the Jewish nation was after the promulgation of the fourth commandment? Neither that gentleman, nor any person, who has read the bible, can imagine so. The truth is that, as God instituted the rite of circumcision to be a sign of the covenant made by him with the father of the faithful, which should distinguish the family of Abraham from the rest of the world, before it became a nation, so he ordained the sabbath afterwards to be a sign of the covenant made with the Jews by the mediation of Moses, which should distinguish them from all the other nations of the earth.

This is the very account of its institution which God himself gives of it, both by Moses and the prophet Ezekiel, though Philander seems unacquainted with any other reason for it besides its supposed moral tendency. In Ex. xxxi. 13. God says, by Moses, to the children of Israel, *“my sabbath ye shall keep, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations,”* and verse 16. *“wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever.”* To the very same purport Ezek. xx. 11 and 12.

“ I gave them my statutes and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also, I gave them my sabbaths to be a sign between me and them.”

Where an evident distinction is made between those ordinances of the Jewish law which were intended to be a moral rule of life, and were alone requisite, and sufficient for salvation, and the merely political institution of the sabbath, which was only a sign of the covenant made by God with that people. And from hence appears the true reason why particular violations of the sabbath were ordered to be punished with so much greater severity than any ordinary instances of immorality, even with the death of the offender: and why their national transgressions of the same sort are declared to be punished with the excision or captivity of the whole nation. Because the non-observance of the sabbath was a rejection of that covenant of which it was made the perpetual sign, and an act of open treason and rebellion against the theocracy under which they lived; crimes which every government in the world finds it absolutely necessary to punish with banishment or death. So far, therefore, is the institution of the sabbath among the Jews from being a reason for its observance among christians, that the declared intent of it as a distinguishing sign of that partial covenant, shews it to be as improper for the universal covenant of Christ, which in its very nature puts an end to all marks of distinction amongst mankind, as the rite of circumcision itself.

With respect to the moral or immoral tenden-

cy of an institution, which puts a stop to all the usual occupations of the people, and obliges them to spend one-seventh part of their lives in idleness, a judicious and accurate observer of human nature must see that, in the common course of things, its tendency will necessarily be immoral. And to expect that the bulk of the people, who are habituated to an active employment of six days of the week, should spend the seventh in insipid idleness, or abstracted meditation, is nearly as unreasonable as it were to expect the earth, at regular periods, to stand still, and the sun to revolve round it. Of the generality of the working orders of men, as well as of children it may with truth be said, *when they are doing nothing, they are doing mischief*. And to be convinced of this, one needs only to survey the state of alehouses, and other places of public entertainment, with those scenes of intemperance, or extravagant dissipation, which present themselves every sabbath, not only in the metropolis and its environs, but in every populous town and village in the kingdom. And for the pernicious influence, which this inevitable abuse of the idleness of Sunday has upon the morals of the people, I appeal not only to the confession of dying malefactors, and the arguments alleged in favour of Sunday-schools, to which I appealed in my former letter, but also to the *brutum fulmen* of the late royal proclamation, which was merely an official paper, issued of course in every reign, at a period (if I mistake not) of about twenty years, and which serves

only to prove, that notwithstanding the interposition of the magistrates as far as they find it practicable, the vicious immorality of the people still continues, and by natural consequence is increased; and that government itself is convinced, that this deplorable corruption of the public manners is greatly owing to what, in common cant, is called the profanation of the sabbath, but is, in truth, only the inevitable abuse of a most unnecessary and impolitic institution of the superstition of the fourth century.

Among the Jews, the divine author of the institution guarded against this fatal consequence, by the very rigid manner in which it was ordered to be observed, and the severe punishment of every violation of it. Not only all business and travelling, but all social, pleasurable intercourse with each other was prohibited; and each family was, in a manner circumscribed within the limits of its own dwelling, except during the hours of attendance at the temple, or in the synagogue. And if modern legislators will persist in establishing by law a similar cessation from the ordinary occupations of civil life, and really wish to prevent the immoral and pernicious abuses of the idleness they alone ordain, they should imitate also the rigid severity of the Jewish law, and (if they think it right, or even practicable) punish every offender with death. But as the institution of the sabbath among christians, is, at present, circumstanced, governors themselves are, in a considerable degree,

the authors of that very vice and immorality which they thus publicly lament and menace, in uselefs, insignificant proclamations.

As to what Philander fays in page 46, concerning the difficulty of making a fudden tranfition of our ideas from worldly affairs to religious reflections, if it does not favour of that enthufiafm which firft led men into deferts and monafteries, under the pretence of withdrawing from fecular concerns in order to preferve continually a *pious frame of mind*, it is to me unintelligible. I can only fay, that, for my part, I am perfectly convinced, unlefs the dictates of a man's religion be, at all times, fo prefent to his mind and thoughts, in the midft not of bufinefs only, but of pleasure and amufement alfo, as to controul and regulate his conduct even in thofe circumftances, his piety is not of the leaft utility either to himfelf or others, and confequently of no value in the fight of God, or thinking men. And with refpect to any benefits arifing from religious instructions or admonitions, to thofe who are willing to attend upon them, I again repeat, that they might be much better attained by employing to thofe purpofes an hour or two in an evening after the bufinefs of the day is ended, two or three times a week, than by employing three or four hours in that manner every feventh day, and fpending the remainder of the day in idlenefs. So much for the institution of the modern fabbath, confidered in a political and a moral point of view. In taking notice of what I had objected againft it, confidered as

an ordinance of the religion of Jesus Christ, Philander has thought fit to charge me, p. 51, with an assertion *contrary to facts*, that is, with a direct falsehood. A charge of so serious a nature as should not have been urged, without the clearest proof, against one whose only motive for writing at all, is the investigation of religious truth, and the important cause of moral virtue.

For the proof of this charge he refers us to his former paper. A paper which I have read over and over, and cannot only not find in it any such proof, but not a single argument besides what is built upon mere conjecture and inferences, as unsupported and unallowable as that extraordinary one in his second paper, p. 53, where he infers, that Paul *tarry'd several days at Troas*, to spend the Lord's day with the disciples, because *he hasted to be at Jerusalem*. The only argument which appears to me intended to controvert my assertion, that *in the holy scriptures, the apostles and first disciples of Jesus Christ are no where said to have distinguished the first day of the week in any manner whatsoever*, is contained in his second paper, p. 51 and 52, where he mentions a passage in St. John, not taken notice of by me, in which the disciples are said to be assembled together in the evening, eight days after the evening that followed the day of our Lord's resurrection. This passage I omitted as nothing to the purpose, especially since the first day of the week is not mentioned in it; first because I had observed that, according to

the Jewish computation of time, every day began about our six o'clock in the afternoon, and as our Lord confessedly rose from the dead upon the first day of the week, *from the lateness of the hour at which the two disciples must have returned from Emmaus to Jerusalem, it is certain that the evening-assembly mentioned John xx. 10. and in the parallel passage of St. Luke* (and consequently the assembly holden eight days after) *was not upon the first, but on the beginning of the second day of the week.* And secondly, because, in the words immediately following, I had remarked, that nothing in the practice of the apostles previous to the feast of Pentecost could be of any obligation to us. Yet Philander, without taking the slightest notice of these two difficulties, and though it is notorious, that the apostles did not even understand the gospel themselves at that early period; and were so far from instituting ordinances for the universal observance of future christians, that they did not attempt to teach the religion of Jesus Christ, till they had received the miraculous pledge and proof of their commission above thirty days after, chooses, to persist in calling the day on which these meetings were holden *the first day of the week,* and to conjecture that *from this last meeting is to be dated the commencement of the christian custom of solemnizing the Lord's day.*

But I will not waste my own or the readers time in a controversy about fanciful inferences and conjectures, or about the meaning or *authenticity* of one particular word in the apo-

calypse. I must repeat that, considering the institution of the sabbath among christians as an ordinance of a religion intended to be universal, which therefore tends to annihilate one-seventh part of the industry of all mankind, and compels them to pass one-seventh part of their lives in useless inactivity, or the too natural abuses of that periodical idleness which cannot but be pernicious to moral virtue, no less authority can be sufficient for its establishment than the express command of the author of the religion, as fully and clearly delivered as that for the sabbath of the seventh day under the Jewish law, or for the commemorative rite of the Lord's supper under the gospel. Unless, therefore, the defenders of the modern sabbath of the first day as a religious ordinance can produce such a command, they really do nothing. However, well knowing the pertinacity with which mankind adhere to customs they have been long habituated to, without any regard to their origin, or the reasonableness or unreasonableness of their institution, I should not have attempted to call the attention of the public to this subject; important as it is, if it had not been demonstrable, beyond all doubt, that no such ordinance as the sabbath was observed by christians till after the second century; and that no such observance was enjoined upon them before the reign of Constantine, who, by the interposition of his civil power, established, not the religion of Jesus Christ, but that idolatrous, blasphemous superstition, the very apostacy from the true religion of the gospel, which

is the peculiar object of almost all the prophecies of the New Testament.

Philander, indeed, does not deny that Constantine first publicly enjoined the observance of the sabbath, but concludes, that he found it in the practice of christians before his time, and therefore established it by law.

That he did not find it in the practice of christians in general is evident, because he would then have established it universally, and not in cities and large towns only. But it is indeed, by no means improbable, that he found it among some professed christians, as he did the celibacy of monks, the use of the sign of the cross, the veneration of saints and martyrs, and the vestiges of almost every other superstitious practice that was afterwards adopted into general usage by the hierarchies of both the eastern and western churches.

Philander seems to know no difference between the first christians assembling together for religious purposes at some appointed hour of the first day of the week, and their keeping the whole day as a sabbath; and his way of arguing is “from such and such circumstances
“or expressions, *I infer, it seems highly probable*
“and *I think* that the apostles and first christians did abstain from all worldly occupations on the first day of the week; and that
“succeeding christians continued to observe the
“new sabbath, thus approved and instituted
“by the example, though not by the precept
“of the apostles.” And this he is pleased to call *proof and demonstration*.

Now, though, in my judgment, Philander has not in the least refuted the arguments I drew from the apostolic decree and St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians : and I am convinced, that, if they had themselves kept or encouraged the keeping a sabbath on the first day of the week, they would have contradicted their own plain precepts and instructions, and consequently that their having done so is, in the highest degree improbable; yet that the christians of the second century practised every observance which they had received as an ordinance of the christian religion, from either the precept or the example of the apostles, there cannot be a doubt. But whether they observed any day as a sabbath, or not, is not a point to be determined by Philander's or my inferences and conjectures, but by the written evidence of those christians themselves.

To them I appealed, in my former letter, as expressly asserting (though they inform us of their assembling for religious purposes, on the first day of the week) *that neither had the gospel enjoined, nor did they practise any such observance as a sabbath.* If therefore Philander has never read the writings of the very few christians of the second century, whose works are come down to us, he was not qualified to argue upon the question; if he has, his pretending to conclude, in opposition to their own clear testimony, that they did observe a sabbath, is unpardonable.

However, to put the matter of fact out of all doubt with those readers who may not be

acquainted with the writings of that early period, I will translate a few passages out of Justin the martyr (who has given us a most explicit account of the time and purport of their religious assemblies, and every thing transacted in them, and to whom all those commentators must refer, whose opinions seem to pass for gospel, with Philander).

In his dialogue with Trypho (p. 227. ed. Par.) he inform us, the Jew objected against the Christians that, *though they boasted of the truth of their religion, and wished to excel other people, they differed in nothing from the heathen in their manner of living; because they neither observed festivals nor sabbaths, nor the rite of circumcision.* To this objection, according to Philander's state of the case, the christian should have replied, that it was not justly founded so far as concerned the sabbath; for that they did keep one, only, for reasons peculiar to their religion, they had transferred it from the seventh to the first day of the week. But instead of this Justin acknowledges the whole charge to be true; and sets himself to prove, that under the new law and universal covenant of the gospel, the external signs of carnal circumcision, and a temporal sabbath were unnecessary and incapable of answering the purposes of the new religion. *There is now, says he, p. 229, need of another kind of circumcision; and you think highly of that in your flesh. The new law will have you keep a perpetual sabbath, and you, when you have passed one day in idleness, think you are religious, not knowing why that was commanded*

you. *The Lord our God is not pleased with such things as these. If any among you is guilty of perjury or fraud, let him cease from those crimes; if he is an adulterer, let him repent, and he will have kept the kind of sabbath truly pleasing to God.* In p. 241, *Do you see that the elements are never idle nor keep a sabbath? Continue as you were created. For if there was no need of circumcision before Abraham, nor of the observation of the sabbath, and festivals, and oblations before Moses, neither now likewise is there any need of them after Jesus Christ, &c.* In p. 245, he says, *Tell me, why did not God teach those to perform such things, who preceded Moses and Abraham, just men, of great renown, and who were well pleasing to him, though they neither were circumcised nor observed sabbaths? And p. 261, As therefore circumcision began from Abraham, and the sabbath, sacrifices, and oblations from Moses; which it has been shewn, were ordained on account of your nation's hardness of heart, so according to the council of the Father, they were to end in Jesus Christ the Son of God, &c.*

Other passages of the same purport might be quoted, not only from this writer, but also from Irenæus and Tertullian. (The former of whom, by the way, cites the very same passages that I have cited out of Exodus and Ezekiel to prove, that the sabbath was at first ordained merely as a distinguishing sign of the Mosaic covenant, and not for any moral purpose, or for any reason which made it necessary to mankind in general) But I persuade myself, these are abundantly sufficient to convince Philan-

der himself, and every candid reader, that the christians of the second century did not observe, and consequently had not received, any such institution from the apostles of Jesus Christ and their immediate disciples: but, on the contrary, that they understood the doctrine of the gospel (as it seems to me every unprejudiced reader of the acts of the apostles, and St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians must do) to teach, that the sabbath as well as circumcision, and every other Jewish ordinance, was abolished by the new covenant, and not unnecessary only, but improper to be adopted into the practice of the disciples of Jesus Christ.

Thus, Gentlemen, I trust, it is clearly evident, that the modern institution of a christian sabbath, or day of cessation from worldly business, whether it be considered in a political, a moral, or a religious point of view, is absolutely indefensible.

Whether my feeble voice may excite the attention either of our governors, or any number of my fellow citizens, I cannot judge. And, if it should, that it will have any efficacy in persuading them to relinquish so long-continued a prejudice, is much more than I presume to hope for. By whatever means it may be accomplished, we are, however, assured, that the whole fabric of anti-christian superstition, which has been so fatally erected and upheld by Constantine and his successors in the civil power of Europe, shall, at length, be utterly demolished. In the mean time, having, to the best of my poor abilities, endeavoured

to explode an erroneous practice of a very pernicious tendency, and shewn that though it is generally supposed to be an ordinance of the religion of Jesus Christ, it is, really, only a groundless institution of that very predicted superstition, I have discharged my own duty, and am,

Gentlemen, &c. &c.

EUBULUS.

To the DIRECTORS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

FROM some particular circumstances it happened, that I did not see your third number nor, consequently, Subsidiarius's remarks, till some time after I had sent you my reply to Philander; and though, in my own judgement, an institution *detaching* one day in seven *from all other engagements, and devoting it to sacred uses*, is much too important in its consequences to society to rest upon no better foundation, than mere inferences, deduced by any body, from ambiguous passages of scripture; yet, as Subsidiarius acknowledges the passages from whence the apostolic sanction of such an institution is deduced to be but three, and assures us, those three appear to him *clear and satisfactory*; and that in particular, from the Acts *ful and explicit*; it will perhaps be thought right that I should explain why I un-

derstand the two first of those passages so differently from these Gentlemen, and why I entirely omitted the passage in the Revelation upon which they are pleased to lay so great a stress. Subsidiarius, it is to be observed, makes great use of the argumentum ad verecundiam, and confronts me with the names of Hallet and of Locke, in defence of his interpretations. But a sincere friend and prudent investigator of truth, like the God of truth himself, is no respecter of persons; nor will he rely implicitly upon the authority even of a Locke, in a case where he is competent (as, in this, every man of common sense and moderate erudition is) to determine for himself.

In Acts xx. 7. the historian, by mentioning the purpose of the assembly of the disciples, informs us clearly also of the time of the day when it was held: for, he tells us, it was *to break bread*. That is, it was either to partake of one common farewell-meal with the apostle before his departure, or else to celebrate together with him the Lord's Supper. If it was the first, all writers, both sacred and profane, teach us, that the customary time of their chief and only fixed meal, was in the evening, on the beginning of the Jewish day. If the latter, still, from what St. Paul writes to the Corinthians upon that subject, we know it was, in those days, celebrated according to its first institution, in the evening at the hour of *supper*. If, therefore, this breaking bread of the disciples was, as St. Luke assures us it was, *on the first day of the week*, it must have been on

our Saturday evening. For the next evening would have been, according to the Jewish computation of time, on the second day. And I leave it to any person of common sense, who has read the passage, to judge whether St. Paul preached to them one whole night, and set out on his journey on Sunday at break of day, as I understand him to have done; or whether he continued to preach to them two whole nights and the intervening day, and set out on Monday morning as Philander and his auxiliary suppose. Subsidiarius indeed, avoids the absurdity of so preposterous a predication, by making the disciples assemble on Sunday evening; but as the hour of *breaking bread* on our Sunday evening was on the second day of the week and not the first, he thereby flatly contradicts St. Luke, and if he could be right, the assembly would have no reference to the subject of the present debate. As to the difficulty which he suggests about the word *morrow*, the quibble would really have amazed me, if I did not well know the omnipotence of habitual prejudice. I only beg that Gentleman will take the trouble of reading the six first verses of the fourth chapter of the very same history, and he will there find the same word *morrow* indisputably used, twice, in opposition to the preceding evening, though, with the Jews, the evening and the morning were the same day.

The next passage affords a striking proof how dangerous it is to allow the imagination to infer any doctrine of importance from the words of scripture, which is not expressly taught in them.

For inference, like fame, though founded, at first, perhaps, upon slight or no grounds, mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo. From St. Paul's order, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. that *upon the first day of the week*, every one should lay up by him in store, as God had prospered him. Subdiarius says, Mr. Locke pertinently and forcibly infers that every one was to bring to the congregation on that day, what their charity had laid aside the foregoing week as their gain came in, that it might be put into some public box, &c. and Mr. Hallet carries the inference still farther, in whose words Subdiarius adds, *when the apostle told the church what they should do when they should meet for worship on the Lord's day, he did as good as order them to persist in this custom of observing this day in this religious manner.* Thus we have here, a change of names from *the first day of the week to the Lord's day*; an apostolic command to assemble on that day for religious worship, and to bring to the congregation the portion of their gain destined for charitable uses; and an order for the perpetual observance of the same day in a religious manner, deduced by circumstantial inference, not only without, but even in direct opposition to the plain sense of the apostle's own words. For instead of ordering them to bring their alms to the congregation, which is the supposed circumstance that first set all the wheels of this curious inference in motion, St. Paul expressly orders every one to lay up a portion of his gain *by him*, in the Creek, much stronger, *κατ' οἶκον*, at his own house, and he was to lay up this charitable

quota making, or when he made *a fund or treasure of what he had gained*, for that is the real meaning of the original, and necessarily implies, that every one was to balance his accounts, on that day, for the preceding week. A business which the Jewish converts would not have performed on the sabbath, the day before: and which is as inconsistent with the idea of detaching that day from all secular engagements, and appropriating it to sacred uses in honour of Jesus Christ, as St. Paul's setting out to travel upon it was in the former instance.

As for the expression *the Lord's day* in the first chapter of the Revelation, supposing, for the present, the epistles to the seven churches, and the preface to them, in which only this expression is found, to be the work of the same author, and of the same age with the rest of that prophetic book, it is very far from clear, that the apostle meant by it what has been since called the Lord's day, and consecrated as a new sabbath in pretended honour of Christ. The book of Revelation must have been written prior to several of St. Paul's epistles, because they evidently refer to it; and at a time when, we learn from St. Luke that the Jewish converts and even the apostles themselves continued to observe the law of Moses, and consequently to keep the Jewish sabbath. And since the language of the fourth commandment of that law is, *the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God*, how can it be more improbable or more improper that the figurative writer of the apocalypse should call the Jewish

sabbath *the Lord's day*, then that other prophets should call the temple *the Lord's house*? Before it can be admitted therefore, that St. John, by that expression, meant *the first day of the week*, *Subsidiarius* must perform the impossibility of proving from other authorities, that it was the custom of the apostolic age to call the first day of the week by that name. Till then his urging that passage of scripture in argument is a mere *petitio principii*, an unreasonable taking for granted the very point in debate; which, I trust, I have, in my reply to *Philander*, demonstrated to be inadmissible.

I am Gentlemen, &c. &c.

EUBULUS.

To the DIRECTORS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

IN addition to the observations of *Philander* and *Subsidiarius*, and in reply to the last communication of *Eubulus*, I beg leave to make a few remarks on what he has advanced with respect to the manner in which christians in general spend the Sunday, or the Lord's day, making it a cessation from all worldly business.

This, *Eubulus* says, p. 14, "is an institution which cannot be productive of any valuable ends, but such as are easily attained without it. It not only occasions a loss to individuals, and to the community at large,

“ of one seventh part of the industry of the
 “ manufacturers and labourers of every kind;
 “ but, what is infinite y more important, in-
 “ duces a very large majority of that most use-
 “ ful and numerous part of the species, to mis-
 “ pend that seventh of their time in dissipation
 “ and intemperance; which too naturally, and
 “ too certainly, leads them to vicious immo-
 “ ralities, and crimes, of every degree.”

In support of this opinion, he says, p. 16.
 “ The apostles and first disciples of Christ are
 “ no where said to have distinguished the first
 “ day of the week, in any manner whatsoever;”
 and again, p. 94. “ The christians of the se-
 “ cond century did not observe, and conse-
 “ quently had not received, any such institu-
 “ tion from the apostles of Christ, and their
 “ immediate disciples.”

Farther, speaking of the writers of the three
 first centuries, he says, p. 21.--22. “ Instead of
 “ informing us that such a sabbath was kept,
 “ they expressly assure us, that neither had the
 “ gospelenjoined, nor did they practise any such
 “ observance.---In the first and purest ages of
 “ christianity, their meetings were short, and
 “ either very early in the morning, before the
 “ usual hours of business, after which they
 “ departed, each to their several occupations,
 “ or else in the evening, after the business of
 “ the day was ended.

As Eubuius seems to acknowledge that the
 practice of the second and third centuries, will
 enable us to ascertain what was the practice of
 the apostles, and agreeable to the will of Christ,

I shall endeavour to satisfy him, that Sunday was spent by christians of that age, as far as circumstances would permit, in the same manner as it is generally spent now, viz. that it was considered as *a sacred day*, and that then christians passed as much time in places of public worship as they do now.

I need not quote particular passages, to prove what must be allowed by all, viz. that in every place in which christians were numerous, there was a place for their assembling themselves, distinct from a private house. This, is evident from Paul's epistles to the Corinthians, especially 1 Cor. ii. 22. Indeed it is natural to suppose, that christians would imitate the Jews in this respect. In these places of general assembly, the epistles directed to whole churches were, no doubt, publicly read, as they continued to be in after times. In these places several services were regularly performed, and proper officers were appointed, and paid for the purpose. We read in the New Testament of *elders, deacons, and deaconesses*. This so exactly resembles the custom of a later period, that it affords a considerable presumption that those officers were employed in the same manner from the beginning, viz. some of them in the instruction of christians assembled for that purpose, and especially on the Lord's day.

That there were these assemblies of christians, and that they were held on the Lord's day, appears pretty clearly from the epistles of Ignatius; which, whether genuine or not, were no doubt written within the period mentioned by Eubulus.

Exhorting Christians to perfect unanimity, he says, “As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father, being united to him, neither by himself, nor yet by his apostles, so neither do ye any thing without your bishop and presbyters. Neither endeavour to let any thing appear rational to yourselves apart; but being come together into the same place, have one common prayer, one common supplication, one mind, one hope, in charity undefiled.--Wherefore come ye all together as unto one temple of God, as to one altar, as to one Jesus Christ, who proceeded from one Father, and exists in one, and is returned to one*.”

Again, speaking of perfect christians, he says, “No longer observing sabbaths, but keeping the Lord’s day, in which also our life is sprung up in him, and through his death, &c.†.”

To these places of general assembly, which were called *churches*, christians came sometimes from considerable distances, which must

* Μηδε πειρασθητε ελλογον τι φαινεσθαι ιδιω υμιν • αλλ’ επι το αωλο μια προσευχη μια δεησις, εις τους μια ελπις, εν αγαπη, εν τη χαριτι τη αμαμω. Εις ειν Ιησους χριστος, ου αμεινον ουδεν ειν. Παντε, ουν ως εις εναν ναον συνηρεχετε δεω, ως επι το εν θυσιαστηριον, ως επι εναν Ιησουν χριστον, τον αφ ενος πατρως προελθοντα, κη εις εινα οντα κη χωρησαντα. Ign. Ad. Mag. c. vii. p. 19.

† Ει ουν εν παλαιαις πραγμασι αναιραφεντες εις καινοτητα ελπιδος ηλυθον; μηκει σαδδαζηντες αλλα και κυριακην [ζωην] ζωτες, εν η κη ζωη ημων ανεβλεν δι’ αυτου, &c. Ing. Ad. Mag. c. ix. p. 20. The Greek has the word ζωην, but as it is not in the Latin translation, and without it there is a better contrast to keeping the sabbath, mentioned immediately before, it is, I believe, universally considered as an interpolation. See the note of Cotilerius on the passage.

have taken up much time, as also must the business that was done when they were assembled. The most authentic account of this is found in Justin Martyr, and is as follows:

“ On the day that is called Sunday, there
 “ is an assembly of all who live in the cities,
 “ or in the country; and the acts of the apof-
 “ tles, and the writings of the prophets are
 “ read, according as the time will permit.
 “ The president discourses, instructing the peo-
 “ ple, and exhorting them to good actions.
 “ Then we stand up to pray, and after prayer,
 “ bread, and wine with water, are brought,
 “ and the president offers prayers and thank-
 “ givings as he is able, and the people join in
 “ saying, amen. Then there is a distribution
 “ and a partaking of the things for which
 “ thanks were given, and they are sent to those
 “ who are absent by the deacons. The rich
 “ give according to their pleasure, and what
 “ is collected is deposited with the president
 “ for the relief of widows, and orphans, the
 “ sick, &c*.”

This is certainly very similar to the account that any person would now give of christians spending the Lord's day. Nothing is said of

* Τη του ηλιου λεγομενη ημερα παντων καλα πολεεις η αγρους μενουων επι το αυθο συνελευσις γινεσθαι, και τα απομνημονευματα των αποστολων, η τα συγγραμματα των προφητων, αναγιγνωσκεισθαι μεχρις ευχαρει. Επειτα, παυσασμενου του αναγνωσκοντος, ο προεδρος δια λογου την νουθεσιαν και προκλησιν της των καλων ταυτων μιμησεως ποιεισθαι. Επειτα ανισταμεθα κοινη παντες, και ευχας πεμπομεν· παυσασμενων ημων της ευχης, αρτος προσφε- ρεται, και οινος και υδωρ· και ο προεδρος ευχας ομοιως και ευχαριστιας οση δυναμις αυτω αναπομπει, και ο λαος επευφημει, λεγων το αμην. Και η διαδοσις και η μεσαιληψις απο των ευχαριστηδων εκασω γινεσθαι, και τοις ου παρουσι δια διακονων πεμποσθαι. Apol. 1mo. Edit. Thirlby. p. 97.

this business being transacted in the morning or evening only; so that we cannot but conclude that it was done in mid-day; and it must have taken up a considerable part of it.

The Lord's day had not the appellation of a *sabbath*, nor was it a *fast*; but it was always called a *festival*; and both with the Heathens and the Jews, festival days were no more employed in labour than fast days, though on them they were at liberty to work if they pleased.

The writer of the epistle of Barnabas, comparing the jewish religion with the christian, says, "The sabbaths which ye now keep are not acceptable to me; but those which I have made, when resting from all things I shall begin the eighth day, that is the beginning of the other world. For which cause we observe the eighth day with gladness, in which Jesus rose from the dead; and having manifested himself to his disciples, ascended into heaven*."

Tertullian comparing the festivals of the Heathens with those of christians, says "If you would indulge to pleasure, you may; and not on one day, but on many. With the Heathens festival days return once a year, but to thee every eighth day is a festival †."

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* Ορατε πως λεγει* ου τα νυν σαββατα εμοι δεκτα αλλα απειποιηκα εν αι καλαπαιουσας τα παντα, αρχην ημερας ογδοης ποιησω, ο εστιν αλλου κοσμου αρχην. Διο και αγομεν την ημεραν την ογδον εις ευφροσυνην, εν η και ο Ιησους ανεστη εκ νεκρων, και φανερωθηκε ανεβη εις τους ουρανοους. Barnabæ Epist. c. xvii.

† Si quid et carni indulgendum est, habes. Non tamen dies tantum, sed et plures. Nam ethnicis semel annuus dies quisque festus est, tibi octavus quisque dies. De Idolatria, cap. xiv. p. 94.

Dionysius bishop of Corinth, in his letter to the church of Rome, quoted by Eusebius, says, “ This day, being the Lord’s day, we keep it holy. In it we read your epistle, as also the first epistle of Clemens*.”

Clemens Alexandrinus says, that “ a true christian, according to the commands of Christ, observes the Lord’s day, by casting out all evil thoughts, and entertaining all good ones, glorifying the resurrection of the Lord on that day†. ’ The same writer even calls the Lord’s day, though not a sabbath, a *day of rest*, the *chief of days*, *our rest indeed*; intimating, at the same time, that the observance of the seventh day was intended to prepare the way for the observance of the eighth‡.

We cannot collect with exactness how much time the primitive christians spent in public worship. But it should seem that it could not be less, but rather more, than we usually employ in it. According to the excellent author of the *Enquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church*, they usually preached an hour. The lessons were also of considerable length.

* Την σημερον ουν κυριακην αγιαν ημεραν διαγαγομεν, εν η ανεγνωκαμεν υμων την επισολην ην εξομεν, αει ποτε αναγιωσκοντες τουθεισθαι, ως και την προτεραν ημιν δια κλημενος γραφεισαν. Euseb. Hist. L. iv. c. xxiii. p. 187.

† Ουδεν ενβολην την καλα ευαγγελιον διαπραξαμεν, κυριακην εκεινην την ημεραν ποιει. οτ αν αποβαλλη φαυλον νοημα, και γνωστικον προσλαθη, την εν αυτω του Κυριου αναστασιν δοξαζων. Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. p. 877. Potteri ed.

‡ Η εβδομη ποιουν ημερα αναπαυσις κηρυσσειαι, αποχη κακων· ετοιμαζουσα την αρχιγονον ημεραν, την το ουλι αναπαυσιν κμων· ην δε και παρην το ουλι φαιεν γενεσιν, εν ω τα παντα συνθεωρειται και παντα κληρονομειται. εκ ταυτης της ημερας η παρην σοφια και η γνωσις ημας ελλαμπειται. Clem. Alex. Strom. vi. p. 810. Potteri ed.

That which was the subject of Origen's homily on Jeremiah, reached from chap. xv. ver. 10. to xvii. ver. 5. and another was from 1 Sam. xxv, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii. part ii. p. 13.

“Their psalms,” Bingham says (Summary of Christian Antiquities, vol. ii. p. 87) “were lengthened to an indefinite number, between every one of which they had liberty to meditate, and fall to their private prayers, which Stillingfleet thought had always a place in their service. They met,” he says, *ibid.* p. 88. “at three o'clock, or our nine in the morning.” It is evident from Cyprian, that they had service both in the morning and the evening; in the morning in commemoration of the resurrection, and in the evening to partake of the Lord's supper*.

I have not quoted any later writers, as Eubulus would not allow them to be of sufficient authority; though when there is no trace of any difference in opinion or practice, among so many discordant sects as christians were soon divided into, it may be presumed that what we find to be the universal opinion, or practice, of a later period, was also that of a former one. I shall, therefore, only just mention what Austin says of the Lord's day. “It is, therefore, he says †, called the Lord's day, because in it, abstaining from all earthly labours, and

* *Nos autem resurrectionem domini mane celebramus. Christum offerre oportebat circa vesperam diei.* Cyprian, *Epist.* lxxiii. p. 156.

† *Ideo dominicus appellatur, ut in eo a terrenis operibus vel mundi illecebris abstinentes, tantum divinis cultibus serviamus.* Aug. *Civit. Dei.* l. xxii. c. xxx. Pearson on the Creed, p. 266.

“ the allurements of the world, we employ it
 “ only in divine worship.” In the Apostolical
 Constitutions also directions are given to *assemble continually* on the Lord’s day. *συνερχεσθε
 αδιωλειπῶς.* Lib. vii. cap. 30.

Besides the public worship of the Lord’s day, the *love feasts* of the primitive christians were also held on the same day, and generally in the evening; as may be inferred from the famous letter of Pliny, in which he says “ the
 “ christians meet on a certain day to sing hymns
 “ to Christ, and lay themselves under a solemn
 “ obligation not to commit any wickedness,
 “ &c. then they depart, and meet again to
 “ partake of an entertainment very innocent,
 “ and common to all.” Tertullian speaks of this love feast as *a supper*, a little before night; and in the three first centuries, Bingham says it was held in the churches, vol. ii. p. 252. According to these accounts, the christians of the three first centuries must have spent a very great part of every Sunday in their churches.

What is here said relates to times of peace, in which christians were at liberty to spend their Sundays as they pleased. In seasons of persecution the public assemblies of Christians, would, no doubt, be much interrupted, discontinued, or be held by night. But there could be no occasion to do this in any place out of Judea till the reign of Nero, because christians were not persecuted by the Romans till that time. Consequently, their first customs would be fixed very early, in the age of the apostles; and they would be the same to which

they would revert, when, after a season of persecution, peaceable times should return. The latter, therefore are an indication of the former.

All, therefore, that could be meant by the primitive christians when they said that they kept no *sabbaths*, must, if we judge by their practice, have been either that they did not observe the Jewish sabbath of the seventh day, or that, as on other festival days, they did not hold themselves absolutely obliged to refrain from labour on Sundays; and in climates in which the weather was uncertain, they would probably work in the fields in time of harvest. Indeed, I see no good reason why we should scruple to do this; as work of this kind comes under the description of *work of necessity*, as much as the lifting up an ox or an ass that should fall into a pit on the sabbath day, which the most rigid of the Jews themselves allowed. In Judea the seasons and the changes of weather are regular; so that no inconvenience would arise from a constant resting every seventh day.

That Constantine intended an absolute cessation from all labour on the Sunday, is not probable, since his order respected Friday*, as much as Sunday; and two days in a week would certainly have been thought too much to abstain from labour. Besides, it is well known, that the

* Διο τοις υπο Ρωμαιων αρχην πολιτευομενοις απασι σχολην αγειν ταις επωνυμοις του σωτηρος ημεραις ενουθετει* ομοιωσ δε κη την προ του σαββατου τιμαν. For such it is acknowledged was the original reading, and not τας του σαββατου.

christians respected the Jewish sabbath, though not in so high a degree as the Lord's day, and had assemblies in the churches on that day.

I would observe, however, that Eubulus is mistaken in asserting, p. 85 that “with the
“ Jews not only all business and travelling,
“ but all social and pleasurable intercourse with
“ each other was prohibited; and each family
“ was in a manner circumscribed within its
“ own dwelling, except during the hours of at-
“ tendance at the temple, or in the synagogue.” No such precept as this is found in Moses, and the Jews in all ages, generally made choice of the sabbath in preference to all other days for their social entertainments. “On the sabbath,” says Reland, “they put on their best cloaths,
“ in honour of it, and use every expression
“ of joy, especially in feasting, and indulging
“ themselves as well as they can afford*.”

I am the more surprized that Eubulus should imagine the Jews spent their sabbaths in this reclusive and rigid manner, when it appears from Luke ch. xiv. 1, &c. that Jesus was invited to what may well be called a *feast*, at the house of one of the chief Pharisees, on the sabbath day. That the company on this occasion was large, is evident from their *choosing out the chief rooms*, and that it consisted chiefly of persons of distinction, is probable, from its giving our Lord occasion to advise his host, that, when

* Porro in ipso sabbatho requiritur indutio vestium pretiosarum, in honorem sabbathi, et summa lætitia, cujus plurima signa edunt, epulando et indulgendo genio, quantum res unius cujusque patitur. *Antiquitates sacræ*, Par. IV. cap. viii. sect. 10. p. 300.

he made a feast, he would not invite *his friends and rich neighbours, &c.* which seems to imply that he had then done so.

The christians of Tertullian's time were far from spending the Sunday in the rigid and gloomy manner in which it was observed by the old Puritans. "It is said" says he, "let your works shine, and now our shops, and gates shine. For you will find more doors without lights and laurels among Heathens than among Christians§." And this book was written when he was a Montanist, the most rigid of all the sects of christians.

Hilary says, "We on the eighth day, which is also the first, rejoice in the festivity of a perfect sabbath†." It is evident, however, that the Sunday festivity of the primitive christians did not consist in sports, but in singing psalms, and other expressions of religious joy, or in chearful society,

What were the practices of the Christians in the times of the apostles, may be pretty safely inferred from those of the times that immediately succeeded them, since we have no account of any difference between them. Besides, the apostles, and all the Jewish christians, having been used to a weekly day of public worship, and having, no doubt, experienced the benefit of it, would naturally continue the same cus-

§ Sed luceant inquit opera vestra. At nunc lucent tabernæ et januæ nostræ. Plures jam invenies ethnicorum fores sine lucernis et laureis, quam Christianorum. De Idol. c. xv. p. 94.

† Nos in octava die, quæ et ipsa prima est, perfecti sabbati festivitate lætamur. Prologus in Psalmorum explanationem. Opera, p. 637.

tom when they became christians, and recommend the same to the gentile converts. Indeed, it is most evident, and allowed by all, that the customs respecting the Jewish synagogues were kept up in christian churches, the former having been, in all respects, a model for the latter.

But independently of these strong *presumptions*, from practices both prior and subsequent to those of the apostolic age, there appear to me to be sufficient marks of regular assemblies being held by christians in the books of the New Testament, and also of those assemblies being held on the first day of the week.

As this day was unquestionably in after times called *the Lord's day*, it may safely be concluded to be the same that was intended by the same term in the book of Revelation. For christians, who made so much use of the books of the New Testament, would never use words in senses different from those in which they apprehended them to be used there. This day, therefore, had, even in the age of the apostles, acquired a peculiar appellation, and was, in the customary forms of speech, distinguished from all the other days of the week; and the probability will be that, along with the same *name*, the early christians received from the apostles the *customs* peculiar to that day, and such as have been recited from their writings.

But there is not wanting, in my opinion, the clearest evidence in the books of the New Testament themselves, that all the christians in such large cities as Corinth and Ephesus assembled for public worship at mid-day, and

that these assemblies were held on the Lord's day. This is more particularly evident from the epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, whose public assemblies required much regulation. In them he distinguishes the church, from private houses, as was mentioned before, 1 Cor. ii. 22. He speaks of the whole church coming together into one place, 1 Cor. xiv. 23, 26. and again 1 Cor. xi. 18. In these churches, or public assemblies, women were to keep silence, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. and strangers were frequently present, so as often to be converted by what they heard or saw in them, v. 23. *If therefore the whole church be come together, into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad. But if all prophecy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is with you of a truth.* It appears also from the epistle of James that strangers frequently attended the public assemblies of christians, ch. ii. 2. *If there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man, in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that hath the gay clothing, and say unto him, sit thou here, in a good place; and say to the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool, &c.*

What do these circumstances give us an idea of, but of such promiscuous assemblies as are now held by christians in all countries, and in mid-day, to which any strangers that chuse it may resort? What were churches in private houses? (1 Cor. xvi. 9 Coll. iv. 15.) but assemblies of christians held there, independent of the proper members of such houses? And where were epistles to whole churches read, but in such assemblies? as in the church of Laodicea, Coll. iv. 16. That these assemblies were held frequently and regularly, appears from several circumstances. Their being attended by strangers sufficiently implies it. For how could such persons know of private, or only occasional assemblies? In Acts ii. 25. we read of Paul and Barnabas *assembling themselves a whole year with the church, and teaching much people.* What could this be but attending regular assemblies of the whole church in that populous city, where the christians were numerous in a very early period?

If these assemblies were *weekly*, there can hardly be any doubt but that they were held on *the Lord's day*; and notwithstanding what has been urged by Eubulus on this head, I cannot help thinking it very evident, that this was the case both at Corinth, and at Troas.

With respect to the former, though the apostle speaks of the money to be collected (1 Cor. xvi. 2.) as laid up by individuals, on the first day of the week; I cannot help thinking with Mr. Locke, that, it was also on that day to be deposited in some one hand,

or place ; because otherwise it would not have answered his purpose, in preventing all gatherings when he should come. Could he mean to intimate that they should every week, and on the first day of the week in particular, put into a private purse in their own houses whatever they intended for this charity, lest it should get mixed with their other money, and afterwards they might not be able, or willing, to separate it ? This, surely, was too trifling, and arguing an unworthy distrust of their liberality. Besides, is not the unquestionable fact of all similar collections of money in after times being made in churches, and on the Lord's day, a sufficient evidence that the practice began in the times of the apostles. Indeed, why should the apostle mention *the first day of the week* on this occasion, if it was not the time of their public assemblies ?

I have particularly considered all that Eubulus has advanced in support of his opinion, that Paul preached at Troas on the evening before the Lord's day, and not on the evening of that day, and think it evident that his conclusion is ill-founded. It appears from Acts xx. 6. that at this time Paul spent seven days in Troas. Why then should he preach to them on the first day of the week, if it had not been the time of their usual assemblies. He had his choice of all the seven days ; but probably, the wind not being favourable for sailing, he did not chuse to call the church together before their usual time of meeting, and before that went from house to house.

Eubulus lays much stress on the Jews beginning the day on the evening. But, as Dr. Lardner says in his *Observations on Macknight's Harmony*, p. 9. (in which he shews that the women went to embalm the body of Jesus on the morning of the first day of the week, and not on the evening of the seventh, though that morning, just before sun rise, is said, Matt. xxviii. 1. to be *the end of the Sabbath*) “ All know very well that the Jewish
 “ civil day began at the setting of the sun ; but
 “ that day was divided into two parts, *night*
 “ and *day* ; by *day* meaning the natural day,
 “ or that part of the civil day which is light.”

To use the term *day* for *day light* was as customary with the Jews as it is with us. Thus, Luke says, ch. xxii. 6. *As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, &c. led Jesus into their council*, though, according to Eubulus, the Jewish day was then half expired ; and all the preceding transactions (of the same day, according to him) are said to be done *on the evening*, and the *night*, as if they belonged to the preceding day ; just as we should now speak. So also Ezra is said (Neh. viii. 3.) to have read in the book of the law *from the morning until mid-day*, though, according to Eubulus, their *mid-day* was passed about the time of his beginning to read. Also the term *next day* is used in opposition to the evening before, though, according to him, it was a part of the same day, Acts iv. 2. *They put him in hold to the next day, for it was now even-*

tide. And yet Eubulus refers to this passage as in his favour, p. 97.

I have no doubt, therefore, but that when we read, Acts xx. 7. *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them (ready to depart on the morrow) and continued his speech unto midnight,* the assembly began in day-light of the Sunday, and that the *next day* was the Monday following; especially as there was then no persecution of christians, to induce them to hold their assemblies in the dark. I shall conclude with a few observations of a more general nature, but I shall not enlarge upon them.

1. If the appropriation of one day in seven for the purpose of public worship was the practice of the apostles, we may conclude that it is not hurtful, but useful. And though we Gentile christians are not bound by the Jewish ritual, we may safely infer that if the sabbath, as observed by the Jews, necessarily led to evil, it would not have been appointed by God for them, And from its not being hurtful to *them*, we may safely infer that it cannot be so to *us*, since human nature is the same. That this observance was prevented from being hurtful to the Jews by any peculiar restrictions with respect to social intercourse, I have shewn to be a misapprehension of Eubulus.

2. In my opinion the cessation from labour on the Lord's day makes a pleasing and useful distinction in our time; and besides its ex-

cellent religious and moral uses, greatly contributes to the civilization of mankind. The expectation of it relieves the labour of all the preceding six days; and consequently that labour is done better with this interval than it would have been without it, to say nothing of the relief that it affords the labouring cattle.

3. Besides, I cannot help thinking that in this country the manufacturers labour to excess; and that it would be very desirable, would contribute to lengthen their lives, and make their lives much happier, if their labours could be moderated. The riches of this nation are procured by the premature exhausting of the strength and vital powers of the greater part of our manufacturers; though it is not denied that the intemperance of many of them contributes to the same effect. Like our horses, their lives are shortened, and made wretched, by fatigue.

4. If the *lawe* did not provide intervals of rest from labour, the labourers themselves would not fail to do it; and the intervals of their own providing would have a worse effect than the present. Our annual feasts, in every town and village in the kingdom, are far more mischievous then Sunday spent in the worst manner. For no ideas of religion being now annexed to them, licentiousness has no restraint.

5. If it were left to every individual to chuse his own time for public worship and instruction (if such a custom could be called *public*) many would greatly abridge, and

many would neglect it altogether ; as we see to be the case with family worship, even where the obligation and use of it are acknowledged. The consequence would be that secular concerns would engross their whole time, and the very appearance and profession of christianity would be in danger of disappearing among us. But on such topics as these I forbear to enlarge, as it has been done sufficiently by PHILANDER and SUBSIDIARIUS.

That much evil arises from the manner in which Sunday is now spent by many, both of the lower and higher ranks in the community, cannot be denied ; but I hope it is not without a remedy, and I am fully persuaded that the abolition of the observance of Sunday would be attended with much greater evil.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your's, &c. &c.

H E R M A S.



TO THE
Rev. Dr. PRIESTLEY.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING, in the last letter I sent to your Repository upon the subject of sabbatizing, or ceasing from all worldly business upon the first day of the week, under the signature of EUBULUS, produced the clearest evidence that the christians of the second century neither observed nor knew of any such cessation instituted by the first and only authoritative teachers of the religion of Jesus Christ, I persuaded myself I had satisfactorily shewn, that such a sabbatical institution, universally observed by professed christians of later times in pretended honour of the Lord Jesus, is not a religious ordinance of his gospel; but a superstitious practice gradually introduced in the third and fourth centuries by the Fathers of the predicted apostacy: and (like all the rest of that irrational, absurd system of baneful superstition which is the peculiar object of the gospel-prophecies), established partly by the Emperor Constantine, and more completely so by his successors in the civil power, throughout all the nations of Europe. And having repeatedly observed that in the case of an institution

so very important in its consequences as the cessation of all manufactures, agriculture, and commerce, and an universal idleness of all ranks of people every first day of the week, certainly is, its advocates as a religious observance did nothing to the purpose, unless they produced, from the authentic records of the gospel, an express command to observe it, as plainly delivered as that for the sabbath under the old, or for the *Lord's supper* under the new covenant, (which we all know to be absolutely impossible). I looked upon the argument as at an end. And being fully convinced that every the most important question respecting either the *faith* or *precepts* of the gospel of Christ, as preached by *Jesus* and his apostles, is determinable by the common sense of any candid, unprejudiced mind, and therefore thinking all prolix, theological controversies as useless and unnecessary, as they have long been unsatisfactory and disgusting to the public, I am sorry to find myself again called forth into the lists of *polemic divinity* by a writer of your justly acquired, extensive celebrity, whose very name must give considerable weight to whatever opinion he espouses, and greatly disparage the contrary persuasion. But the cause of *truth*, of *rational religion* and of *moral virtue*, is too important to be given up in compliment to the personal dignity of any character, howsoever great and respectable.

When, induced by the motives mentioned in my first letter, I ventured to offer to public notice my objections against the modern

sabbath of professed christians, I was well aware that so hardy a step in behalf of rational christianity, against mere error and superstition, would offend the prejudices of the great bulk of mankind, who are led blindly on by habit and popular custom, and, in religious matters especially, far from using their reason with freedom and candour, scarce ever think at all. It was easy also, for very obvious reasons, to foresee that it would be peculiarly displeasing to the *Clergy* of all the various sects. But I confess I did not expect that your philosophic mind, in the investigation of an important truth, could have yielded to the bias of habitual or professional prejudice. Yet, without supposing that to be the case, I cannot account either for your solicitude to infer the necessity of different orders of *ministers*, maintained solely for the performance of religious offices, from the appointment of *Elders* and *Deacons* mentioned in holy scripture, nor for your uncandid manner of pretending to controvert my argument, whilst you really change the question in debate, without attempting to shew the falsehood or fallacy of what I had alleged as absolute demonstration.

With respect to the modern ministers of the gospel, I have too great a dislike of theological controversy, as it is usually carried on, to suffer myself to be drawn into a fresh dispute on their account. Every civil government has a right to appoint such officers as it judges necessary, or beneficial to the community, and to provide for their maintenance at the

public charge. And the individuals of particular societies have the undoubted liberty of disposing of their own private property in whatever way they approve. So long, therefore, as either *policy*, *pride*, or *superstitious error*, shall induce my countrymen to maintain the ministers of their religion as an order of men secluded from all secular occupations, and as much distinguished and separated from the rest of the people as the levitical priesthood under the law of *Moses*, I shall never take upon me to object to their doing so. Much less am I inclined to blame the clergy of any sect themselves, for preferring *otium cum dignitate*, genteel ease and honourable leisure, accompanied, in all cases, with a secure and certain competence, and, in some, with opulence and the highest honours, to the uncertain acquirements of their own active industry in the more obscure and less respected employments of commerce or the various arts. But, as an impartial investigator of truth in the very important science of revealed religion, I must have leave to say, that there is nothing in the nature or precepts of the gospel, nor in the practice of the apostolic age, to induce any one to think such a peculiar appropriation of an order of men, to the sole purpose of teaching christianity to christians themselves either necessary, or intended by the great author of our religion.

It is true, that Overseers or Bishops, Elders or Presbyters, by contraction Priests, and Deacons are spoken of in the New Testament. And you say Deaconesses too: I sup-

pose, alluding to the situation of *Phebe* in the church of Cenchrea, by whom the epistle to the Romans is said to have been sent. And if you are satisfied from that or any other circumstance, that *femalè* ministers were appointed in the christian churches, even in the times of the apostles, you must allow that it makes an order of *Clergywomen*, as *Sterne* calls them, amongst both Papists and Protestants equally necessary, as the mention of the former does orders of *Clergymen*. The same scriptures however, which mention those *male* officers or ministers in the apostolic age, mention also the nature of their office and the reason of their appointment: and teach us, that they were ordained on account of the exigencies of the little christian communities of those early times, which do not exist amongst us. And even then teaching the christian religion, was so far from being the peculiar office of those original Priests and Deacons, that many of them never attempted it, whilst many others, and those the most authoritative preachers of the gospel, were not, and indeed could not be either of one order or the other.

The man whose mind is perplexed and entangled in that mysterious complicated web which the bigotted prejudices and corrupt passions of erring men have, from time to time, spun out of Judaism and Pagan superstition, is so far from being capable of teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to others, that he does not understand it himself. But he who views the religion of the *new covenant* in its native

plainness, purity and undisguised simplicity, so peculiarly characteristic of that gospel which was avowedly preached to the poor, and addressed to the understanding of the most illiterate, well knows, that there is nothing in the genius, the precepts or the intent of christianity, which he cannot, in the space of a single hour, explain fully and intelligibly even to the meanest intellectual capacity. The teaching such a religion as this can never be a sufficient employment for any person's whole time and attention. And, indeed, the incessant pursuits of your own active, indefatigable mind in the various researches of natural and experimental philosophy; the laborious task of educating youth, which some of the clergy and the constant round of dissipated idleness, which others are seen to make compatible with all the functions of their ministry, prove that it is not so, even under the complex system of doctrine which is adopted more or less by almost every religious society of the present day.

When the first heaven-commissioned preachers of the gospel were obliged to leave their usual occupations and abode, and to travel into distant countries, it was highly reasonable, it was necessary, that they should be maintained in their peregrinations by those they taught. But even in this instance, St. Paul both by example and precept*, discouraged the making use of so just and reasonable a claim upon the disciples, except in cases where they could not by their own industry maintain themselves.

* See 2. Theff. iii. 6—12, and Tit. iii. 8 and 14.

And whatever compensation may be supposed to have been made to the Elders, or Priests and Deacons, or ministring servants of each congregation, for their extraordinary trouble and loss of time, I find not the slightest reason to believe that any *resident* preacher of the gospel was maintained as such, at the expence of his fellow christians before the latter half of the third century; when corruptions multiplied apace, and the fatal predicted apostacy advanced with large and hasty strides. The language of Christ's apostles, is, *if any man will not work, neither should he eat.* And indeed, my good Sir, his gospel is much too perfect a school of moral virtue, either to furnish to any set of men a pretence for spending their whole lives, or, to his disciples in general, the seventh part of their lives amidst the snares of idleness and inactive leisure.

But enough, perhaps you will say too much, upon a subject which in whatsoever light it may be viewed by others, is certainly quite distinct and different from the question of debate proposed in these letters.

That question, Sir, is simply whether the keeping the first day of the week as a *sabbath*, that is, as a day of general rest and cessation from all secular occupations, which is the only meaning of the word *sabbath* that I am acquainted with, be an institution either appointed by the precepts of the gospel, or observed by the christians of the apostolic and next succeeding ages.

In my reply to *Philander*, I produced the

clear express testimony of the most respectable writer of the latter half of the second century; to prove, that the christians of that century *did not observe and consequently had not received any such institution* from the apostles and their immediate successors. And since you have been pleased, in aid of *Philander* and his former assistant, to undertake to invalidate this proof and establish a persuasion, that the first day of the week has been observed, even from the times of the apostles themselves, *much in the same manner* as christians observe it now, it was absolutely necessary, that you should have shewn the testimony I had produced to be either false, or at least, irrelevant and insufficient; and alleged contrary evidence from the same or other writers of that century. For; as to the writers of the third century, were the passages you have quoted from them, much more to your purpose than they really are; did they expressly declare that on the *Lord's day* as they then affected to call the first day of the week, they really *sabbatized* or abstained from all worldly business; still so long as there remains irrefragable demonstration that the christians of the second century observed no such institution, they would be so far from affording any presumptive proof that such a practice had descended to them from the apostles, that an impartial mind attending duly to the great prophecies of the gospel, could regard the observance only as one effect of the predicted, gradually increasing superstition and apostacy from genuine christianity.

But the writers you have quoted assert no such thing ; some of them quite the contrary : and none of them except Austin, who lived many years after Constantine had commanded the observance of the modern sabbath, prove any thing more than, that *the first day of the week*, as it was called by the disciples of the apostolic age, *Sunday* as *Justin Martyr* calls it, or *the Lord's day*, as it was denominated in the third century, was the day on which their religious assemblies were chiefly and most generally held. A fact which I am so far from controverting, that I myself had remarked it in p. 21 of my first letter. And in my reply to Philander, p. 92, I referred to the very passage in *Justin's* apology, which you have quoted at full length as containing information that I was unacquainted with or such as opposed my argument.

In my first letter, p. 21, I observed, that it seemed *necessary some stated time should be fixed for the purpose* of celebrating the Lord's supper in particular, and I neither made, nor could have the least objection to its being fixed on the first day of the week. All that I have contended for is, that on whatever day or days of the week the religious assemblies of christians are appointed to be held, there is nothing in the gospel of Jesus Christ, or in the practice of his earliest disciples, that enjoins or countenances a cessation from the ordinary occupations of life during the intervening hours of such day or days : and that therefore every consideration of prudence and good policy requires,

that the hours appointed for such assemblies, after the example of the two (I might say, three) first centuries, should be fixed so as not to interfere at all, or as little as possible, with the usual hours of labour and worldly business. But since you have been pleased to infer from Justin, that the religious assemblies of christians in his time were held in mid-day, and *took up a considerable part of every sunday*; and to assert with Mr. Bingham, that they met for morning service *at our nine in the morning*; and to tell us *that sunday was spent by christians of that age, as far as circumstances would permit, in the same manner as it is generally spent now*, it is necessary to examine, particularly, the several passages you have quoted from the early christian writers as testimonies in favour of your argument.

The two first of these are from the apocryphal writer of the epistles called Ignatius's. And as the former only forbids the separating from the general society of christians, and, perhaps, the withdrawing into hermitages and solitary places, for the purposes of religion; and enjoins their assembling all together, as one body in one common place of worship, to all which I neither do nor ever did make the least objection; I can have no concern with it. The latter, even allowing the very unwarrantable liberty which you and other critics are pleased to take with the original, expressly contradicts your assertion "that they spent sunday as christians spend it now;" and directly confirms all that I have advanced upon the subject.

For it declares that professed christians of the writer's time did not keep any *sabbaths*. And therefore let what will be meant by the words *keeping the Lord's day*, as you translate them, they certainly cannot mean keeping it as a day of rest and cessation from all business, as christians keep it now. For then the author's words would run, " *no longer observing sabbaths, but observing every Lord's day as a sabbath,*" an absurdity too great to be attributed to any writer. But pray, good Sir; by what rules of construction do you translate ζῶντες κείνα, *keeping*? The only meaning of those two greek words, that I am acquainted with, is *living according to*. And if the word ζῶν be allowed to be part of the original sentence, the phrase *living according to the Lord's life*, viz. the spiritual life he now lives in heaven, is perfectly intelligible and much of the same kind with what we meet with in several places of the canonical epistles, particularly in that to the Colossians, c. 3. But, if the phrase *living according to the Lord's day*, has any meaning at all, it is entirely beyond my comprehension.

Your next authority is the well known relation of all that was transacted in the religious assemblies of christians, in the second century, contained in Justin's first apology to the Roman Emperors, of which you have favoured us with a translation. And you are pleased to remark upon it, that it is very similar to the account that any person would now give of christians spending the Lord's day; that nothing is said of this business being transacted

in the morning or evening only; so that we cannot but conclude, that it was done in mid-day; and it must have taken up a considerable part of it. What different inferences and conclusions do different persons draw from the same premises! Justin's account informs us of only one religious meeting held on Sunday by christians of his time, whereas, in our times, they assemble twice and some three times on that day. The business transacted there, he tells us, was, 1st, reading either the history of the apostles or the writings of the prophets, *according as the time permitted*; an expression which appears plainly to intimate, that no long time was employed in it. 2dly, A discourse of the president of the society upon the lecture they had just heard, explaining the prophecies and exhorting them to the imitation of such good examples. 3dly, Their standing up all together and praying to God, not vicariously by the mouth of another, but by their own. And 4thly, The receiving the *Eucharist* or Lord's supper. Far from taking up a considerable part of the day, I see nothing here that can be reasonably supposed to have usually taken up more than an hour and half at the utmost. The preacher's discourse was limited to the exposition of the portion of scripture read, and a few practical comments upon it: very different from the practice of any religious assembly of modern times, that I am acquainted with. Here was no psalmody or spiritual concert of voices, either alone or mixed with instruments, which, in

after times, when religious meetings were made the chief and indeed the only business of the whole day, were introduced both to rouse the flagging attention of the audience, and agreeably to occupy no small part of that time, which it was then thought right to while away in those assemblies*. You, Sir, indeed have translated *Pliny's* letter to *Trajan*, so as to make him represent the christians as meeting solely for the purpose of singing hymns. But you know, Sir, that the word *carmen* does not always signify a song, but very frequently a prayer. And what *Pliny* intended to relate to the Emperor was merely his own erroneous conclusion, that the christians *prayed* to Christ as to a God. *Pliny*, it is to be observed, differing from *Justin's* account, mentions two religious meetings of christians on the same day. But it must also be remembered, that, at the date of his letter, the severe persecutions they laboured under, compelled them to hold their assemblies by stealth, and, in order to escape the notice of informers, they appear from *Pliny's* account, to have divided the usual business of those assemblies, and to have met *ante lucem* before break of day, before the ordinary occupations of the day were begun, for the purposes of instruction and

* It was common for such as had good voices and musical talents, to sing hymns and sacred songs, at the love feasts, which, in times of tranquillity, usually followed the celebration of the Lord's supper, as the only kind of mirth and pleasurable entertainment, that those banquets of religious benevolence could with propriety admit. But it doth not appear that music, in the earliest ages, ever made a part of christian devotion.

prayer; and to have reassembled in the evening to partake of the Lord's supper. As to the time which the congregation spent in offering up their own prayers as mentioned by *Justin*, when we consider the very concise model of prayer given them by Jesus Christ himself, his repeated censures passed upon *long prayers* and *vain repetitions*; and his teaching his disciples that *to think they should be heard of God for their much speaking*, was a superstitious idea fit only for the ignorant heathen, we cannot suppose it to have been considerable. And there is nothing surely in the celebration of the Eucharist which could occupy any great length of time.

This circumstance also of the Lord's supper constantly making a part of the business of their weekly religious meetings, is certainly, Sir, very far from being *similar* to the practice of modern christians, at least, I know of no sect amongst whom it is so observed. Give me leave likewise to remark upon this particular of the *Lord's supper*, that directly contrary to your conclusion, that the assembly described by *Justin was held in mid-day*, it very clearly ascertains the time of holding it to have been in the evening. For from St. Paul's epistles, Pliny's letter, and even from the passage you yourself have quoted from that father of the * Romish Church, Cyprian, it is

* The phrase *offere christum*, which you have thought fit to render *partaking of the Lord's supper*, shews that Cyprian patronized the Roman-Catholic idea of the mass.

evident, that during the three first centuries, the evening was the only time of celebrating the Eucharist or Lord's supper. Such a meeting therefore could not at all interfere with the usual business of the day.

Having mentioned your quotation from *Cyprian*, that I may avoid the necessity of repeating hereafter any remarks upon a passage of so little importance to the question in debate between us, I will here just observe, that though he speaks of two religious meetings as common in his time, he is very far from agreeing with you, that either of them was held at our nine in the morning, or at any hour which would have occasioned it to interrupt their usual daily occupations. He expressly says the first was held *manè* early in the morning, as indeed it must have been, to make it properly commemorative of the time of our Lord's resurrection, for St. Luke informs us, that had taken place in the very obscurest part of day-break. From the reasons *Cyprian* gives for holding their religious assemblies at such times, it appears, that, in the latter end of the third century, superstitious motives had induced them to adopt the very same practice to which cruel necessity compelled their predecessors in the reign of *Trajan*. But not the least hint is given, that the intervening hours of the day were passed in sabbatical rest and idleness.

Your next quotations, Sir, are, from the spurious, fanatick epistle of *Barnabas*, which refers us, for the only sabbaths acceptable to

God, to those *which he hath ordained shall take place in another world*, where the week (he seems to imagine) is to consist of eight days instead of seven; from *Tertullian*; from a letter quoted by *Eusebius*; and from *Clement Alexandrinus*. This last writer, by the way, in both the passages you have quoted from him, declares that the only sabbatical rest of christians, is, *a rest from evil thoughts and evil actions, according to the command of the Gospel*. A command which extends equally to every day of a man's whole life; and by the performance of which, a true christian, in *Clement's* sense of the expression, makes not *Sunday* only, but every day of the week; *the Lord's day**.

But why do I waste my own and the reader's time in remarks upon passages which have no reference to the only question that I am at all concerned in, viz. Whether the keeping sunday as a sabbath, or day of rest from all worldly business, be an institution of Jesus Christ, or his Apostles, and, consequently, the religious duty of a christian? The only inference which you yourself, Sir, deduce from them, is, that the first day of the week, or as you are pleased to denominate it, *the Lord's day*, had not the appellation of a sabbath, or day of rest, but was always called a festival; and on festivals, you tell us, both the Heathens and Jews were at liberty to work if they pleased. Surely this

* You have thought fit to translate *Clement* as saying that a true christian glorifies *the resurrection of Christ, on that day*. But you must have known that *εν αυτω* could not refer to *ημερα*; and that therefore the words of *Clement* were not *on that day*, but either *thereby* or *in himself*.

is granting every thing that I contended for ! For nothing can be more evident, than that if the apostles of Jesus Christ had, by their example and precept, enjoined upon their disciples a cessation from all worldly labour on that day, as Philander, and Subdiarius, and yourself, in other parts of your letter, maintain, to keep it strictly as a sabbath must have been an indispensable duty, and no christian could have been at liberty to work on it, though he had wished to do so. And, therefore, if even the christians of the third century did not call it a sabbath, but only a festival, a day on which men *were at liberty to work if they pleased*, it is a demonstration that they knew of no apostolic ordinance of a cessation from worldly labour on that day. And all the writers of the third century, quoted by you, concur with those of the second, referred to by me, in proving that the sabbatical observance of sunday, is not an institution of the gospel of Christ.

Indeed, Sir, to me who have no interested cause to serve by the discussion, and no habitual prejudices of any religious sect to sooth and gratify, and whose sole motive in this and every other theological enquiry, is the investigation of truth, and detection of superstitious error ; which must ever be beneficial to the cause of rational christian *Piety*, and, consequently, of *Humanity*, it is matter of amazement and concern to see a philosopher of your distinguished eminence, contending against an obvious truth (which he himself, is, after all,

forced to admit) with an inconsiderate precipitancy and a confused inconsistency of argument, equally unworthy the importance of the point in question, and the uncommon talents and justly acquired fame of Dr. Priestley.

Yet in one page of your letter you inform us, that the primitive christians observed the first day of the week *much in the same manner in which christians observe it now*, when not only from a general opinion of religious duty, but by the express command of the legislature, men are compelled to rest from worldly labour of every kind. And when your own particular friends, the Dissenters, observe the sabbatical rest of that day, after the example of their predecessors the Puritans, with much more rigid strictness than the members of the legally established church. And in another page you tell us, that with the christians of the three first centuries, it was not a *sabbath* or day of rest from worldly business, but a pleasurable festival; and that, *as on other festival days, they did not hold themselves absolutely obliged to refrain from labour on Sundays; that they probably worked in the fields in time of harvest, and that you see no good reason why we should scruple to do this.* To which I beg leave to add, nor I neither.

You observe, further, *that it is not probable that Constantine intended an absolute cessation from all labour on the Sunday, because his order respected Friday as much as Sunday.* Had you not written too precipitately to allow yourself time to consult the order of Constantine itself,

you would have seen, that notwithstanding the groundless criticism about the original reading of an expression in Eusebius, that order had not the least respect to Friday, and that it was not *probable*, but certain, that Constantine, with a prudent policy, which ought to put the modern legislators of Christendom to the blush, gave his subjects the most unrestrained permission to follow the business of husbandry on Sunday; not only in harvest time, but in every season of the year †. *Let all Judges, says the Emperor's edict, and towns-people, and the occupations of all trades rest on the venerable day of the sun. But let those who are situated in the country, freely, and at full liberty, attend to the business of agriculture; because it often happens, that no other day is so fit for sowing corn, or planting vines, lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted them by the providence of heaven.* Upon this imperial order, which is the first authoritative institution of a sabbatical observance of Sunday, I must beg leave to remark, that the partial manner in which Constantine enjoins a cessation from their ordinary business upon his subjects, demonstrates that he knew of no previous ordinance of such an observance derived from the apostles of Christ: for that, like

† Omnes judices urbanæque plebes et cunctarum artium officia venerabili die solis quiescant. Ruri tamen positi agrorum culturæ libere licenterque inserviant, quoniam frequenter evenit, ut non aptius alio die frumenta sulcis aut vineæ scrobibus mandentur, ne occasione momenti pereat commoditas cœlesti provisione concessa. Dat. Nonis Mart. Crispo 11. et Constantino 11. Conf.

Corp. Jur. Civ. Codicis Lib. iii. Tit. 12:

all other ordinances of the gospel, must have been equally obligatory on all christians whatsoever; and, therefore, he could have had no more right, in that case, to have remitted the observance to his country subjects from motives of good policy, than any Ruler of the Jews had to dispense with the obligation of the 4th commandment of the Mosaic law in favour of the Jewish husbandmen.

In one part of your letter you tell us, from *Tertullian*, that christians were allowed to indulge to corporeal or carnal pleasure (*carni indulgendum*) every festival of the Lord's day; and, in another, that they were far from spending the Sunday in the rigid and gloomy manner in which it was observed by the old Puritans. And that they adopted the Pagan custom of adorning their doors with lights and laurels on that day, more generally than the heathen themselves did on their festivals. I suppose to denote to all the world their joyous, pleasurable festivity. And yet, in the very next page, you tell us, *it is evident however that the festivity of the primitive christians did not consist in sports, but in singing psalms and other expressions of religious joy or in cheerful society.* What meaning you may have, Sir, in the words *cheerful society*, I do not presume to determine; but as far as festivity consists in expressing religious joy, by hymns and devout effusions of praise and thanksgiving to heaven; I am satisfied the old Puritans were quite as festive as the primitive christians could be. And I cannot see the propriety of *making their shops and gates shine*

with lights and laurels, because they were indulging themselves in the *carnal* pleasure of psalm-singing. Seriously, Sir, the subject of debate between us is of sufficient importance to have demanded of you an attentive and mature consideration of whatever passage you chose to quote in arguing upon it. And such a man as *Dr. Priestley*, should read no author so imperfectly, nor write on any subject so hastily, as to be in danger of misrepresenting and perverting the authority he quotes.

Ter tullian, in the paragraph which you have quoted from him, is not talking of the manner in which the christians of his time spent the Sunday; but is pointedly arraigning them of the guilt of idolatry, for partaking of the feasts made by their pagan friends, in honour of their false Gods, and for adopting the very rites in use amongst the heathen, as *insignia* of the celebration of their idolatrous festivals. To obviate one plea against the first part of his charge, their assisting at the pagan feasts, viz. the natural desire of sometimes enjoying better cheer than their ordinary fare, he says, “ If any
 “ indulgence must be allowed to the corporeal
 “ appetite,” (which as a rigid *montanist* he was inclined to doubt) “ you have frequent
 “ opportunities of gratifying it, for to you
 “ every eighth day is a feast-day,” manifestly alluding to the love feasts, which, as you rightly observe, were held on Sunday evening. To another plea for their thus living in common with the heathen*, that it afforded them an

* Sed luceant, inquit, opera vestra : At nunc lucent ta-

opportunity of fulfilling the Evangelical precept of letting the light of their works shine before men, he replies, "But now," (instead of our works) "our shops and gates shine, " you will now find more doors of the heathen " without lights and laurels than of christians." As the heathen could never have been expected to hang out lights and laurels in honour of the *Lord's day*, I should have imagined it impossible for any man to understand, even from this first sentence of Tertullian's argument, that he was talking of rites practised by christians on Sundays; but if you had allowed yourself time to read only one line farther, his very next words would have put it out of your power to have so strangely misapprehended and misrepresented him. "What," (adds Tertullian) "must be thought of such a sight as that " also? If it is an honour paid to the Idol, " without doubt honouring an Idol is idolatry. " If it is done on account of man, let us recollect, that all idolatry is on account of man. " Let us recollect that all idolatry is a respect " paid to men, since it is granted even by the

bernæ et januæ nostræ: plures jam invenies ethnicorum fores sine lucernis et laureis, quam Christianorum. De ista quoque specie quid videtur? Si idoli honor est, sine dubio idoli honor idololatria est. Si hominis causa est, recogitemus omnem idololatriam in hominis causam esse, recogitemus omnem idololatriam in homines esse culturam, cum et ipsos deos nationum homines retro fuisse, etiam apud suos constet. Itaque nihil interest, superioris an hujus seculi viris superstitione ista præstetur.—Accendant igitur quotidie, lucernas; quibus lux nulla est, adfigant postibus lauros post modum arsuras; quibus ignes imminet; illis competunt et testimonia tenebrarum, et auspicia pœnarum. Tu lumen es mundi, et arbor virens semper.

“ heathen themselves, that their gods were
 “ formerly men. And therefore there is no
 “ difference whether that superstitious cere-
 “ mony be performed from a respect to men
 “ of a former age or of the present.” To the
 same purpose, he continues to argue at some
 length against this culpable practice of pro-
 fessed christians upon the festivals of the hea-
 then Gods, in compliance with the customs of
 their pagan friends and neighbours, and hav-
 ing contrasted it with the opposite conduct of
 the three jewish brethren, under Nebuchad-
 nezzar, and of Daniel under Darius, concludes
 his argument thus, “ Let them therefore daily
 “ light up candle, who have no light in
 “ themselves. Let them set up, before their
 “ doors, boughs of laurel which must soon after
 “ be thrown into the fire, who are themselves
 “ doomed to the flames. Such rites are suit-
 “ able to them as being both an evidence of
 “ their darkness, and an omen of their future
 “ punishment. But thou (*christian*) art the
 “ light of the world, and a tree ever flourish-
 “ ing with verdure.”

But the inconsiderate hastiness with which
 you have entered into the public discussion of
 a question of great importance, that has betray-
 ed you into so gross a misrepresentation of
 Tertullian, is not the only thing that I com-
 plain of, and am truly sorry to observe in such
 a writer as Dr. Priestley. In your mode of
 arguing you have shewn a want of candour,
 on this occasion, which I know not how to
 account for in a liberal, philosophic mind, and

an avowed friend to the investigation of religious truths.

The only point in debate between us, I must again repeat, was, whether the apostles of Jesus Christ instituted, or their immediate disciples and the christian churches, previous to the *orthodox* church established by Constantine, observed a sabbatical rest from all worldly occupations on the first day of the week, as all sects of nominal christians do at present. That they did not, I had demonstrated by the clearest and most incontestable evidence. And you yourself give up the whole that I ever contended for, by allowing that the primitive christians of the three first centuries were at liberty to work on sunday, as well as on the other days of the week, if they pleased. Yet still, Sir, you undertake, at the beginning of your letter to prove, that those same primitive christians spent sunday *in the same manner as it is generally spent now*. And to effect this, you quote some passages from early writers to shew, first, that sunday was the day on which they usually held their religious assemblies, a fact which I never attempted to controvert. Though both you and I know, that with a great many*, thursday and friday were held as sacred as sunday; and that, by all, saturday was a day as generally used for holding their religious assemblies as the *Lord's day* itself. Nay, when the Judaizing disposition to sabbatize one day in the week, prevailed in the fourth century, many years after the edict of Constantine, so

* See Mosheim Sæc. 2. Par. 2. c. 4. sect. 8.

much more reasonable did it appear to many to keep the fourth commandment of the Mosaic law completely, than to keep the spirit of it, and transgress it according to the letter; that the Council of Laodicea* thought fit to publish an anathema against the practice. And that even that episcopal denunciation was insufficient to prevent it, the sect of sabbatarians which subsist on this day, is a living evidence. A variety of practice and of opinion, respecting the reason for preferring one day of the week for their religious meetings before another, which must convince every impartial mind that the meetings on the first day of the week recorded in the Acts of the apostles are mentioned merely by accident, to ascertain the date of some other circumstance; and that the apostles themselves, whose duty St. Paul informs us was to preach the gospel *in season and out of season*, and who therefore could not confine their teaching christianity to any one day in the week, far from ordaining any day to be observed as a Jewish sabbath, did not even prescribe any particular day for the holding their religious assemblies.

The second object of your quotations is to shew that in the very latter end of the second or beginning of the third century, Sunday was distinguished from the other days of the week, not by being accounted a sabbath, which the side you have been pleased to take in the dispute required, but by its being, in some

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* Concil. Laod. K. 29.

fense or other, called a feast or festival day. And in order to accomplish even this insignificant purpose, you have quoted writers whose authority you yourself cannot allow. For you have not only produced a quotation of Eusebius from Dionysius of Corinth, as if it might be as securely depended on as the work of the author himself, although the same Eusebius informs us (Lib. 4. c. 23.) that Dionysius himself complains of the alterations and interpolations made in his letters in his own time, and the ecclesiastical historian is notoriously so little cautious and accurate in distinguishing spurious writings from genuine, that he has attributed to Justin Martyr the *questions and answers to the orthodox*, a book which refers to circumstances that did not take place till after Justin's time: but you have also quoted passages from the epistles of Ignatius and Barnabas, writings which, I believe, every competent impartial judge is now satisfied, belong to very different authors and times from those to whom they have been so long attributed: but whose authority you, Sir, as an unitarian assertor of the proper manhood of Jesus Christ, and as a Presbyterian must disallow. For they both expressly assert the pre-existence of Jesus Christ in heaven, Ignatius as God * and Barnabas as

* Even in the first passage you have quoted from him, Ignatius says, *one Jesus Christ, than whom there is nothing greater*, as every learned reader will perceive, in the margin of your letter; although, with a prudent caution (considering your own avowed religious principles, and that you were quoting his authority to prove what was the religion of the apostolic age) you have entirely omitted those words in your translation.

the son of God, before his appearance upon earth. And the pretended Ignatius, in the paragraph preceding that which contains one of the sentences you have quoted from him, instead of agreeing with you, that the office and authority of a Presbyter is equal to that of a Bishop, exalts the latter to so much higher a degree, that whilst he compares the Presbyters to the council of the apostles, he resembles the Bishop to almighty God himself. Now, Sir, whatever weight the testimony of such writers as these may be of in determining the doctrine and discipline of the apostolic church, respecting the observance of Sunday, or, as it was denominated, in the third century, the Lord's day, it must certainly be of equal weight to determine the doctrine and discipline of the same church, respecting the divinity and pre-existence of Jesus Christ, and the superior pre-eminence of the order of Bishops above that of Presbyters. And I appeal to yourself, whether it be not a mode of arguing in the highest degree uncandid and disingenuous, to urge any authority whatsoever in favour of such opinions as you approve, and to reject the very same authority in such cases as you disapprove and condemn.

The truth, however, is, as any impartial person will be convinced, who attentively reads *the Acts of the apostles* and the epistles of *Paul*, particularly that to the *Galatians* and the writings of Justin Martyr and Irenæus, that *feast days* or *festivals*, were absolutely incompatible with the genius of the christian religion; as

taught by the apostles and their immediate successors, and the very term unknown in the church for far the greatest part of the two first centuries. But because the Jews had not only been themselves the first persecutors of the christians, but, after their own power was at an end, continued to instigate the Pagans to persecute them also; in order to reconcile their religion, in some degree, to the habitual prejudices of the Jews, and to lessen their inveteracy against them, the christians in the close of the second century, forgetting or disregarding all the timely admonitions of St. Paul, against this very perversion of the religion of the gospel, adopted the annual festival seasons of Easter and Whitsuntide, in resemblance of the Jewish festivals of the Passover and Pentecost. And, as the Jewish sabbath was accounted a weekly festival, they also by celebrating their love-feasts every first day of the week, in pretended commemoration of our Saviour's resurrection, instituted a kind of weekly festival amongst christians also, and changed the name of it to the *Lord's day*.

These were the first practical corruptions introduced into the discipline of the christian church. But they did not stop here. For early in the third century after the persecution under the emperor *Decius*, with a similar view of reconciling themselves to their persecutors, by making the public institutions of their religion resemble those of Paganism itself, they began to adopt also the festivals of the heathen gods, and even to celebrate them with the

same festive rites and ceremonies that the heathen themselves did, only under the name and in pretended honour of our Saviour or his apostles, or of some distinguished christian saint and martyr, And, to complete the resemblance, the simple commemorative rite of the Lord's supper, which they celebrated on their new festivals, was represented as an actual sacrifice offered to Almighty God.

Thus every heathen festival in the Roman calendar was, by degrees, transferred into the ritual of the church. And this mode of assimilating their manners and religious customs, to those of the Pagans around them, was found to answer the purpose of diminishing the *odium*, that till then had attended the christian name, far better than those fabulous corruptions of the doctrines of the gospel which had been introduced in the second century, in resemblance of the mythological origin of Minerva, Hercules and Æsculapius. For, as Sir *Isaac Newton* hath justly remarked, from that time professed christians increased greatly in numbers, though they decreased as much in virtue. And the riches that flowed into the church, through the channel of their usual charitable collections, from the continually increasing multitude and wealth of the converts to this new religion, being at the disposal of the elders and ministers of the several congregations, and supplying them with the means of living in ease and indolence, unknown and impracticable to the teachers of genuine christianity, soon prompted them to arrogate to themselves an exemption from all

the laborious or careful occupations of civil life ; and, in imitation of the *Levites* amongst the Jews, to claim an entire separation from the rest of the people ; to assume a distinction of dress and title, calling themselves *Clergy*, men peculiarly *allotted* to the service of God ; as if the Gospel of Christ knew of any other service of God besides a virtuous, benevolent, and holy life ; or as if all ranks and orders of real christians were not equally *ordained*, and bound to a faithful, constant discharge of that service.

In this heterogeneous medley of religion, both in discipline and doctrine, derived partly from Judaism, but much more from Pagan superstition, and retaining in it nothing christian besides the name, the great object aimed at was not so much the reformation of mens' lives, the sole purpose of Christ's gospel, as the establishing a commutation with Almighty God in behalf of his creatures, for their wilful and habitual transgressions of the plain precepts of the gospel. For this irrational, this criminal purpose, professed christians were taught and enjoined to do much more than the Deity has commanded in many cases, in order to atone for their disregard of what he has actually commanded in others. The merit of the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ himself was held up as a complete satisfaction for the disobedience of his disciples. The times and seasons of austere abstinence and mortification, introduced by such superstitious enthusiasts as *Montanus*, were adopted by the church. And its members

fondly believed, that the devout observance of fasting days, made amends for the intemperate excesses of the newly established festivals ; and the abstemious penance of lent, for all their vicious irregularities during the rest of the year.

Such, Sir, was the origin and abuse of both feast and fast days in the orthodox church. And so little reason is there for your asserting, that in the apostolic and primitive church of Christ, the first day of the week was *always* called a festival.

But it is curious to observe how gradually, even in this depraved state of the church as it existed in the third and succeeding centuries, the *mystery of iniquity*, as the apostolic prophet calls it, *worked* its way in the superstitious adoption of a Jewish sabbath upon this weekly festival of the Lord's day, and how long it was before it could fully accomplish it.

When mens' minds were once reconciled to the ideas of recommending themselves to heaven, by an extraordinary degree of sanctity and devotion, displayed on particular days and seasons, it could not be difficult to persuade them, that by remitting all attention to the concerns of the present world one day in every week, an instance of pious confidence in divine Providence enjoined upon the Jews by God himself, in the fourth commandment, and spending the festival of the Lord's day wholly in frequenting public worship, or other devout occupations, they would shew a piety highly acceptable to God, atone in some degree for their transgressions of the other six days, and

derive a blessing upon their affairs in general. And to the clergy themselves, who had now no other employment besides the parade of those external rites and ceremonies which had been adopted by the newly transformed church, and the preparing for an ostentatious display of their learning, and rhetorical abilities from the pulpit, it must have been particularly desirable, and almost necessary, in order to maintain that Levitical distinction, and Pontifical dignity and importance, to which they had elevated themselves, that there should be one day in the week, at least, in which the *Laity* as all christians but Ecclesiastics were now humiliatingly denominated, should have their attention taken off from all worldly business, that they might be at full leisure to attend to the ingenuity or brilliancy of their oratory, and the pomp with which they now affected to perform the ministerial functions of their religion. Yet, to oppose their attempts of this kind; even in the third century, frequent remonstrances were made against this spirit of *Judaizing*, so it was then called, as being inconsistent with the religion of the gospel. Clement of Alexandria, in the very book you have quoted, says, † “ We are commanded to worship God through Jesus Christ, *not on chosen days* as some others do, but continually through our whole life.” ---- Wherefore a well informed christian worships God not in any stated place nor chosen temple, nor on any *festivals and appointed days*, but through

† Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. 7. p. 851.

“ his whole life, in every place, whether he
 “ chance to be alone or in company with
 “ other believers.” And some copies of that
 epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians, which you
 have thought fit also to quote, have the follow-
 ing sentence*, “ Therefore let us not keep sab-
 “ baths in the Jewish manner, as if we de-
 “ lighted in idleness, for according to the sa-
 “ cred oracles, whosoever doth not work
 “ should not eat, and in the sweat of thy face
 “ shalt thou eat bread. But let each of us sab-
 “ batize in a spiritual sense.” This passage,
 indeed, is by some critics supposed to be an
 interpolation. But, however that be, it af-
 fords an undoubted proof that the keeping any
 day as a day of rest from worldly labour, was
 disapproved and publickly censured in the time
 of the writer. And though Constantine, from
 motives of the same interested policy, which
 induced him to establish the new religion, was
 without doubt desirous to gratify the wishes
 of the clergy, they could not, as we have seen,
 prevail with him in the fourth century to ordain
 more than a partial cessation of worldly busi-
 ness on that day. So that it was not till near a
 century and half afterwards, that, in obedience
 to a second imperial decree, in the reign of
 Leo†, professed christians *spent Sunday in the
 same manner as it is generally spent amongst us.*

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* Vide Böhmeri Differt. 1. Sect. 18.

† Dies festos majestati altissimæ dedicatos, nullis volumus voluptatibus occupari, nec ullis exactionum vexationibus profanari. Dominicum itaque diem ita semper honorabilem

And since, in consequence of the division of the empire, the decrees of the eastern emperor Leo did not bind the christians of the west ; we find the council of Orleans, in the sixth century, in their 28th canon, decreeing as follows*, “ Because people are persuaded that
 “ they ought not to travel on the Lord’s day
 “ with horses, oxen and carriages, nor to pre-
 “ pare any thing for food, nor to employ them-
 “ selves in any way conducing to the cleaning
 “ and adorning their houses or persons, a per-
 “ suasion which is proved to be fitter for Judea,
 “ than for the observance of christians, we ordain

decernimus, et venerandum, ut a cunctis executionibus excusetur: nulla quemquam urgeat admonitio: nulla fide jussionis flagitetur exactio, taceat apparitio: advocatio delitescat: sit ille dies a cognitionibus alienus: præconis horrida vox silescat: respirent a controversiis litigantes et habeant fæderis interval- lum: ad sese simul veniant adversarii non timentes, subeat animos vicaria pænitudo: pacta conferant, transactiones loquantur. Nec hujus tamen religiosi diei otia relaxantes, obscœnis quemquam patimur voluptatibus detineri. Nihil eodem die sibi vindicet scena theatralis, aut circense certamen, aut ferarum lachrymosa spectacula: et si in nostrum ortum aut natalem celebranda solemnitas inciderit, differatur. Amissionem militiæ, proscriptionemque patrimonii sustinebit, si quis unquam hoc die festo spectaculis interesse, vel cujuscunque judicis apparitor prætextu negotii publici seu privati, hæc quæ hac lege statuta sunt credederit temeranda. Dat. Id. Decemb. Constantinop. Zenone et Martiano Conss.

Corp. Jur. civ. Cod. lib. 3. Tit. 12. l. 11.

* Quia persuasum est populis die dominico cum caballis et bobus, et vehiculis itinerare, non debere neque ullam rem ad victum præparare, vel ad nitorem domus, vel hominis pertinentem, nullatenus exercere quæ res quia ad Judæam magis quam ad observantiam Christianam pertinere, probatur id statui- mus die dominico quod antea fieri licuit licere. De opere tamen rurali, i.e. agricultura, vel vinea, vel sectione, vel messione, vel excussione censuimus abstinendum, quo facilius ad eccle- siam venientes orationis gratia vacent.

Concil. Aurel. iii. c. 28.

“ that those things are lawful to be done, as
 “ as they have heretofore been lawful.” With
 ideas indeed very different from those of Con-
 stantine, the council proceeds to determine,
 that people should abstain from those works
 of husbandry which usually occupy the whole
 day, “ that they might be at leisure to come
 “ to church for the purpose of public prayer.”
 But that religious duty performed, they are
 left at liberty to employ the rest of the day as
 they pleased. In no nation of Europe there-
 fore, except our own, nor even in that till since
 the reign of Charles II. has the sabbath
 been kept in the rigid manner in which the
 emperor Leo decreed, and the Puritans of
 later years preached up its observance. Yet, I
 persuade myself, you will readily agree, that it
 were better for the morals of the people, that
 they should be occupied in their ordinary la-
 bour than in frequenting sports and pastimes.

As to the instances I produced from St.
 Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians, and the
 Acts of the apostles, to shew that St. Paul him-
 self neither kept the first day of the week as a
 sabbath, nor had any idea of enjoining such an
 observance upon his disciples, they still appear
 to me clearly conclusive of the point I intended
 to prove. And if the arguments deduced from
 them in my former letters are not sufficiently
 intelligible, as I must suppose from your man-
 ner of replying to them, I have to regret that
 it is not in my power to make them more so.
 But I would as soon mispend my time in at-
 tempting to prove that the sun shone at noon

day, to a person who should persist in affirming it to be then midnight darkness, as I would contend with any one who will assert, that an express precept for a man to lay by money, *in his own custody*, signifies that he should deposit it, *in the custody of another person*: or, who well knowing that, in the times of the apostles, the hour of assembling together, both for their ordinary chief meal, and for the celebration of the Lord's supper was in the evening, at the beginning of the Jewish day, persists in maintaining, that a predication which St Luke informs us took place at that particular time, did not commence then, but at an hour when they never assembled for those purposes. I will, therefore, only remark, on the latter instance, that I am sorry to appear so ignorant to Dr. Priestley, as not to have known, that amongst the Jews, as in every other nation, the word *day* was used sometimes to denote the periodical revolution of twenty-four hours; at others, to express *daylight*, in opposition to darkness or night. I am sure, the force of my argument required that it should be so understood. And I only quoted the beginning of Acts iv. to convince Subsidiarius, whose head seemed to be prepossessed with modern English ideas, that though the word *morrow*, or *morning*, in our language signifies the next civil day, because our evening and subsequent morning are in different days, yet, amongst the Jews, when opposed to the preceding night or evening, it meant the same civil day, because, with them, the evening and following morning were in the same day.

With respect to the passage quoted from the epistle to the Corinthians, I must observe, that though I doubt not St. Paul's exhortation in this instance, being misunderstood by the christians of after times, gave rise to their weekly collections both for charitable purposes, and the defraying the necessary expences incurred in the œconomy of their several assemblies; yet, in the times of the apostles themselves, no such custom was instituted. And the collection, proposed by St. Paul, was not an usual practice, as Mr. Locke and you, Sir, seem to imagine; but an extraordinary contribution, which St. Luke tells us (Acts xi. 29) "the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined, to send," to relieve the christians of Judea, under the pressure of that famine which the prophet Agabus had predicted would happen; and "which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar." And so far was the apostle from supposing, with you, that their destined contributions were deposited weekly in a charity-box, or in the hands of a treasurer, that in his second epistle, c. 9. written a full year afterwards, he mentions same charitable contribution, hopes they are the ready with it, and exhorts them to contribute liberally and cheerfully. And so delicate was he in money matters, that he tells them, 1 Cor. xvi. 3. when he comes he will not take charge of their liberality himself; but will send it to Jerusalem by such persons as they shall approve; and if there be any necessity for his own going, those persons shall accompany him,

undoubtedly, as witnesses of his disinterested integrity. Accordingly, St. Luke informs us, in the Acts, that the money was sent to the elders at Jerusalem, “by the hands of Barnabas “ and Saul.’

Of my observation that *all social pleasurable intercourse with each other*, was prohibited by the Jews upon the sabbath day, you are pleased to say that I am mistaken in the assertion. And, in the close of your letter you affirm, that *you have shewn* the idea of such a prohibition to be a misapprehension of mine. I cry your mercy, Sir, for my dulness, but I am unable to discern any thing like demonstration in the case. You tell us indeed that *the Jews, in all ages, generally made choice of the sabbath in preference to all other days, for their social entertainment*. And if you, Sir, are not deceived, and the fact could be as you state it, that the Jewish sabbath was in all ages, a day of *joyous, social feasting and indulgence*, then I must say, that the Almighty himself could not have devised an institution more effectually tending to corrupt and deprave the morals of such a creature as he hath made man; and that all blame and punishment of that people, for their immoralities, and particularly for their pollution of the sabbaths, would have been unreasonable and unjust. But, I am persuaded, you are too candid an arguer to expect that your bare affirmation of such a fact should pass for proof. And the only two testimonies of it, which you have thought fit to allege, seem to me very inadequate to support so paradoxical a conclu-

tion. In my present situation, I have not the means of recurring to Mr. Reland's book itself, which I must own I rather regret, after the specimen you have given me of your quotation from Tertullian; because as the custom amongst the Jews, of wearing their best apparel, and eating and drinking of the best they had in every family, in honour of their *spouse*, the sabbath, are mentioned, from the Jewish doctors, both by Calmet and the authors of the Universal History, I cannot help thinking that Reland, and every other writer upon the same subject, must, like them, have mentioned other circumstances also absolutely incompatible with that convivial mode of keeping it which you ascribe to them *in all ages*. But even the single sentence you produce, from his *Antiquitates Sacræ*, does not say what you are pleased to infer from it. *Epulando* has by no means the force of *Convivando*, which it should have to imply the custom of making social entertainments on that day; nor does he say, as you represent him, that they used *every expression of joy*; for he must have known that the most common expressions of joy, music, dancing, singing, and the like, were never admitted by the Jews on the sabbath day. He only says, that they gave many tokens of the joy and gladness, with which they were required to honour the sabbath, by making the best cheer at their tables that each particular person's circumstances could afford. A mode of expression, which seems almost to limit the usual participation of the good cheer he speaks

of, to the members of each particular family; for at feasts and great banquets, the good cheer of the guests is supposed to be proportioned to the circumstances of the inviter, and not to those of each individual housekeeper.

In the fourteenth chapter of St. Luke it is said, that our Saviour went into the Pharisee's house *to eat bread* on the sabbath day. A mode of phraseology, which seems calculated to denote only the simplest ordinary repast of the day, and as unexpressive of his going to a feast, as can possibly be imagined. From which, and from our Lord's mentioning a dinner as well as a supper, in his admonition to the Pharisee who had invited him, it appears most probable that this was not a supper, as all the entertainments of the Jews, which can with propriety be called feasts were, but a dinner, a meer morning or mid-day refreshment after their return from the synagogue. Why therefore you should say it *may well be called a feast*, I cannot comprehend, unless you infer it from the multitude of the guests invited; for you tell us, *it is evident that the company was large, from their chusing out the chief rooms*. Surely, Sir, you did not write this with such precipitate haste, as to suffer yourself to be misled by the sound of the double-meaning word *rooms* in the English translation, and to conclude that the guests were numerous enough to occupy different rooms or apartments in the house. The original, you well know, signifies only the highest places at the table. And whether, that table were large or only of a moderate

size, the eagerness of those who were to sit at it, to arrogate to themselves the precedency, must be equally discernable and equally deserving the reproof it met with. For my part, I understand our Lord's invitation from this Pharisee to take the usual mid-day refreshment at his house, in a very different light. Jesus was at that time travelling towards Jerusalem, and preaching the gospel in every town and village in his way. And the rumour that went before him, which his doctrine and miracles had excited, we are informed was, † "That God
 " had visited his people, and that a great pro-
 " phet was risen up amongst them." Now it seems very natural that motives partly of hospitality, partly of curiosity, should have induced the chief man of the place to supply such a stranger with the usual repast after their morning attendance at the synagogue: and that he should have invited such of his friends and acquaintance, as were desirous to see and discourse with so distinguished and extraordinary a personage, to meet him at his house and partake with him of such things as according to the customs of the Jews, must have been, not only prepared, but, also, placed upon the table the preceding day. And as the occasion of the meeting, being to hear and converse with the new prophet, may be justly deemed religious, it was the means of their more effectually and usefully observing the precept to sanctify and keep holy the sabbath day. But if one, or several instances, should be produced, in which the chief methodist of

a town or village has invited the late Mr. Westley, in the course of his peregrinations to dine with him on a Sunday, and asked some of his friends and neighbours to meet him; would it be justice to that sect of professed christians, to infer from it, that, Sunday was *in all ages generally made choice of*, by the methodists, *in preference to all other days for their social entertainments and joyous feasting?* Yet it is far less probable, nay, as it appears to me, impossible, that it should be true of the Jews respecting the sabbath, whilst they observed either the spirit or letter of the law given them by Moses.

By that law*, it was commanded, that no man should “go out of his place on the seventh day.” A precept, which induced me, in my former letter to say, and I think with sufficient reason, that *with the Jews, not only all travelling was prohibited; but each family was in a manner circumscribed within its own dwelling.* And though they interpreted this prohibition in such a manner, as to make it consistent with their duty of going to the temple or synagogue, and with the performance of works of necessity, such as leading or driving their cattle to water, or walking abroad for their health, yet the Rabbis limited the distance they might go, even for these purposes, to two thousand cubits, and some of them within still narrower bounds. This circumstance alone must have rendered the preferring *the sabbath to all other days for their social entertainments*, absolutely impracticable to those Jews who were situated in the

* Ex. xvi. 20.

country. By the fourth commandment they were also enjoined to keep the sabbath holy. Now, do you really think, Sir, that the way to sanctify the sabbath was to make it a day of festive mirth and conviviality? Or could such a practice be made compatible with the spirit of that precept? They were to do no work of any kind, nor even to light a fire in any of their houses; insomuch, that the man who picked up a few sticks on the sabbath day was actually stoned to death; and our Saviour apologized by the plea of hunger and necessity for his disciples who had only rubbed out, in their hands, some ears of corn on that day. The most natural and common expressions of mirth and festivity, as I have before observed, were deemed unlawful on the sabbath day. No victuals could be dressed, and it was necessary, that, sufficient provision for every family, both of meat and drink for the twenty-four hours, should be placed upon the table before the commencement of the sabbath; for it would have been death to a Jewish servant to have served up any thing afterwards. The lamps or candles that were to light them at supper, their chief meal, and during the whole evening, were always lighted before the close of the preceding day; and if by any accident they were extinguished could not be relighted. Now, Sir, is it possible that the Jews should have chosen for their convivial entertainments, in preference to all others, a day when no servant could wait upon their guests; when they could give them only a cold collation; when if the

lamps or candles chanced to be extinguished, they must sit in the dark ; when no amusements of any kind could be introduced for their entertainment ; when if any sober guest, in the warm climate of Judea, had desired a cup of fresh cold water, or any of the jovial ones had wanted another flaggon of wine, neither could have been brought them ?---Yet this, Sir, is not all ; for the spirit and meaning of this command to sanctify the sabbath, as God himself has explained it by his prophet Isaiah†, forbad them the gratification of their own pleasure on that day, and even all such useles, trifling conversation as, generally speaking, must be the language of the mixed company of social banquets. The prophet's words are, “ not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* (or, as other interpreters supply the epithet, *vain, idle*) words.” Upon this authority, Sir, I thought, and still think, myself well warranted in asserting, that by the law of Moses, *all social pleasurable intercourse with each other was prohibited* on the sabbath. And, to shew that I am not singular in this opinion, bishop Patrick says of this same verse of Isaiah, “ From hence it appears, that the precept of keeping the sabbath day holy, did not enjoin merely a bodily rest ; but implied likewise setting the day apart for the services of religion.” And the authors of the Universal History § assure us, from the Jewish Doctors, that on the sabbath, “ No discourse about buying and

† c. lviii. v. 13;

§ Vol. 3. b. i. c. 7. Note m.

selling, or any other worldly matter, much less loose and profane talk, is to be suffered †.

Having thus stated the grounds upon which my ideas of the Jewish sabbath are founded, I leave it to the candid, impartial reader to determine, whether the charge of misapprehension and misrepresentation of that Mosaic institution, falls more justly upon me or you. However, viewing things in that light in which alone they present themselves to me, I cannot forbear remarking, that when the Deity ordained the sabbath to be a sign of the particular covenant, made between himself and the nation of the Jews, by the severe and rigid manner, in which he ordered it to be observed, he prevented those gross abuses of that weekly idleness, which tend inevitably to corrupt the morals of the labouring ranks of people. When he ordained a new and universal covenant, to supersede the Mosaic, not only with the nation of the Jews, but with every nation upon earth, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, no external, partial, distinguishing sign of his covenant could be of use, and therefore none is instituted by the gospel. But when the imperial founders of the orthodox church thought fit to re-ordain the observance of a weekly sabbath, a sign of nothing but their own superstitious propensity to patch the plain and simple gar-

† See also the letter of Philander in this collection, p. 28 and 29. which, when compared with what Dr. Priestley has said upon the same subject, affords a striking contrast of opinion, between two champions of the same cause, and who mutually compliment each other on their skill in interpreting scripture.

ment of christianity with the motley rags of Judaism as well as Paganism, being either unable or unwilling to enforce the same rigid mode of observing it, which alone rendered it harmless to the Jews, they not only, by a very remarkable triumph of superstition over civil policy, annihilated one-seventh of the active industry of their labouring subjects; but at the same time established a constant source of depravation of their morals. You, Sir, and many other well disposed persons, able and accustomed to read and meditate, and discourse upon moral and religious topics, may employ the intervals of that leisure day both innocently and advantageously: for such minds, to use the language of our great dramatic moralist,

“ Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
“ Sermons in stones and good in every thing.”

But the unreflecting minds of the ignorant and illiterate, that is, of a very large majority of the lower ranks of life, are absolutely incapable of this beneficial use of those weekly periods of idleness; and, therefore, their abuse of them, some way or other, is the certain, necessary consequence. Of this the world has had the experience of full fourteen centuries; and, as I observed in my first letter, the royal proclamations periodically repeated in our own country, prohibiting, though ineffectually, those very abuses as the certain sources of vice and immorality; and the confession of numerous criminals at every goal delivery, are irrefragable proofs.

Yet still, Sir, you, a philosopher, an ex-

perimental philosopher, of such distinguished eminence, in opposition to this notorious experience, persist in asserting the *excellent religious and moral uses* of this weekly *cessation from labour*, and are fully persuaded that the abolition of it would be attended with much greater evil than arises from its abuses.

Whensoever, good Sir, you are able to invalidate and refute all the evidence I have produced to demonstrate, that the sabbatical observance of Sunday is not an institution of the gospel, but of the imperial authority of the fourth and fifth centuries; and can shew, not by uncertain, disputable inferences, which, however ingenious, are altogether inadequate to decide a question of such great importance, but, from the plain express words of holy scripture, that such an observance is indeed a christian duty; you will have a right to adopt such language. Until then, it is really saying that the almighty Author of the gospel covenant did not perfect his own work, by the mediator he expressly ordained for that purpose, as he did in the Mosaic covenant; but Constantine and Leo completed it for him: and that Jesus Christ and his apostles were so far from understanding the genius of the religion they taught and founded, that they left it, for three centuries, deficient in point of an institution of great importance to the morals of their disciples; and are at last indebted, for the supply of that defect, to *Antichrist* himself, to that very civil power of the Roman emperors and their successors, who have so fatally

established all the grossly superstitious, predicted corruptions of christianity. Whether such language, Sir, is becoming a christian, a philosopher, or even a man of common sense, *judge you.*

But the sabbatical observance of Sunday, you tell us, *greatly contributes to the civilization of mankind.* Has your historical erudition, then, really given you cause to think, that the sabbath-keeping Jews carried civilization to a greater height than any other people of former times? And have you forgot that the most civilized of the antient states, the Greeks and Romans, never kept a sabbath? How widely Doctors differ! According to the Roman poet, “*ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes, emol-
lit mores nec finit esse feros.*” And surely, “*Sir, Ovid is right. The civilization of mankind is effected, not by observing a weekly sabbath, but by the cultivation of the arts and sciences; and by an enlarged commerce with the world. Turn your eyes across St. George’s channel, to the inhabitants of those parts of Ireland which are remote from any considerable city, and whither manufactures have not yet reached:--they are all bigotted Roman Catholics: and as such they and their forefathers, for many centuries, have been constant, devout observers of a cessation from labour, not only on every Lord’s day, but on many a Lady’s day besides. Yet, in all that time, so little hath that observance contributed to their civilization, that, even now, we speak of them by the appellation of the Wild Irish. In the*

north of Scotland also, from the time of Knox, at least, the inhabitants have been strict observers of the imperial precept to rest from labour every sabbath. And I beg, Sir, you will compare the state of civilization there, previous to the year 1745, to what it now is, since the wise policy of the late reign brake the clans and introduced manufactures and commerce amongst them : and judge more justly of the cause of their improvement in that respect than to ascribe it, in any degree, to their keeping the modern sabbath.

If indeed the inducing servants and manufacturers to dress beyond their stations, and to put on the external appearance of Ladies and Gentlemen one day, at least, in every week, were to be called civilizing them, there would certainly be good grounds for your observation: but this, Sir, is one of the evils of our mode of sabbath-keeping which I lament. For the universal idleness of the day, affording the young of both sexes amongst them an opportunity of displaying their persons before the public, not only in the religious assemblies they frequent, but through all the remaining hours of the day in visits, walks or excursions with parties of their acquaintance, even in those who abuse the institution in the least immoral degree, it cherishes, if it does not excite, personal vanity, and a desire of ornamenting their persons by expensive modes of dress, which are not only unbecoming their

humble stations in life, but inconsistent with both the spirit and express precepts of the Gospel; and lead many of them into such early habits of extravagance, and unnecessarily expending all their earnings, as keep them constantly in a state of indigence, which, instead of the blessings they are naturally calculated to be, too often renders them burthens of nuisances to the community.

As to the case of some manufacturers labouring to such an excess as to injure their healths, in general, that can only be owing to a greediness of gain, excited by intemperance and dissipated profusion, evils, of which, amongst the labouring ranks of people, the idleness of Sunday is most commonly the cause, and always the means; but if any regulation of policy be really necessary on that account, let but all masters of manufactures agree, or the legislature enjoin, that they shall not work by the piece, but by the day of a certain number of hours; and though they should work seven instead of six days in the week, there would not be the least danger of their impairing their strength, or shortening their lives, by excess of labour and fatigue.

In the fourth of your concluding observations, you are pleased to assert, that if the working people were left to adopt their own intermissions of labour, they would be attended with worse effects than those which the law provides for them. And you allege the abuses of the annual festivals as instances; forgetting, surely,

that those annual festivals are not of the people's providing, but institutions of the very same ecclesiastical superstition, and the very same imperial authority that have ordained the cessation from labour every Sunday. That every labourer and manufacturer would sometimes intermit his work, for the sake of his health, amusement, or some consideration of convenience to himself or his friends, cannot be doubted. They do so now. But then each person's intermission being determined only by his own particular circumstances or inclination, few of them would intermit their labour at the same time, (except in extraordinary cases which excite general attention and curiosity) and they would each be occupied in those engagements which caused their cessation from their usual work. At present, the greatest danger and worst of consequences arise to society, from its being known to every vicious, evil-disposed man, that on certain stated days and seasons, the whole multitude of labouring people must be at leisure to undertake any thing to which they can be craftily seduced and instigated. Even the violence of that *democratic* fury so lately excited, at Birmingham, by the malice and insidious artifice of orthodox and *aristocratic* zeal, in which you Sir, and your friends, suffered so unworthily and cruelly, to the grief and indignation of every humane mind, and the eternal disgrace of the people of Birmingham and the police of this kingdom, would not have been protracted to

the length it was, but for the expectation which the approaching weekly cessation of all the neighbouring works gave the rioters of a large reinforcement of their numbers.

As to what you say, in your fifth observation, about *every individual chusing his own time for public worship and instruction*, I really do not apprehend your meaning. Wherever public religious assemblies are held, it is obvious that the hours of assembling must be fixed and publicly known. And nothing that I know of prevents that being equally the case whether the people spend the remaining hours of the day in honest, useful industry, or in mischief, or doing nothing. In many places, the two very different sects denominated Quakers and Methodists, hold religious assemblies, not only on Sunday, but also in the middle of the week; the first at noon-day, the latter in the evening, after the business of the day is over; and they are as regularly, and as decently, and to all appearance, as devoutly attended as their usual meetings on Sunday. And since no unprejudiced person can doubt but that the religious instruction they receive at these Wednesday assemblies, are as edifying to themselves and their devotion, at least, as acceptable to heaven as it can be upon Sunday, no rational objection, upon a religious account, can be made to their usefully employing the intermediate hours of Sunday also in the same lawful pursuits and honest occupations, which they are engaged in all the rest of the week.

Thus, good Sir, I have endeavoured to reply to your defence of the modern Sabbath, and to vindicate myself against your friend's rude and severe charge of *inconsiderate rashness* and hostility *to the cause of Piety and Humanity*: with what success, I leave to the candid reader to determine. I persuade myself, however, that, between us, you and I have, now, incontestably demonstrated that the sabbatical observance of Sunday is not a religious ordinance of Christ and his apostles, but of the Roman emperors-Constantine and Leo, and their successors in the civil power of Christendom.

No man is better acquainted than yourself with the unhappy corruptions of the doctrines of the gospel, which have been systematically established in the world by the authority of the same Roman emperors, and the same succession of civil power. And every friend of genuine, unadulterated christianity must acknowledge the great merit of your learned exertions, to restore that first fundamental article of all rational, true religion, the undivided unity of God. To me, Sir, it appears essentially necessary to the reception of the pure religion of the gospel of Christ, and to the world's enjoying those happy effects of it, which it is most assuredly destined to produce, that, not the doctrines only, but, the positive institutions also of christianity, should be clearly discriminated in the minds of men, from those of the predicted antichristian superstition. But if,

after all, you and others are of a different opinion, and really experience such advantages from the sabbatical observance of Sunday, as induce you to think it right to adhere to it, from whatsoever quarter the institution is originally derived. We are then reduced to the very situation, in this respect, in which the author of the epistle to the Romans describes the converts to christianity to have been, in his time: when those who, like St. Paul, were sensible of the perfectly free and unrestrained genius of the gospel, *esteemed every day alike*; whilst the minds of others unable to surmount the prepossession of habit and long established custom, could not forbear *esteeming one day above another*. And we, also, should shew the same charity towards each other that they were taught to do, solicitous only that our own observance or non-observance of sabbatical rest on Sunday, may be accompanied with the faithful discharge of our christian duty to God, and to our fellow creatures every day of the week.

For my part, I have not the arrogance to expect that my feeble voice should reach the ears, much less attract the attention of our civil governors. But had I any influence with the legislature, I assure you, Sir, it should not be used to induce them to oblige any persons to work on Sunday, or any other day contrary to their inclination or religious prejudices. I wish only, that all men might be left to enjoy the liberty, in this respect, wherewith the gospel of Christ hath made them free; and, that I

could dissuade our rulers from the impolitic, unnatural, and, in its inevitable consequences, immoral tyranny of compelling their subjects to be idle.

I am,

With all due respect,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful humble Servant,

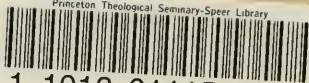
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